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Life and letters of Arabella Stuart including numerous original and unpublished documents. Vol. 1

by

Elizabeth Cooper.

London,
Hurst and Blackett,
1866.

Dedicated

TO

ROBERT CHRISTOPHER LUSH, Esq., B.A.

IN TESTIMONY OF SINCERE FRIENDSHIP

AND RECOGNITION OF MUCH DISINTERESTED KINDNESS.


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PREFACE.

IN the composition of a work like the present, drawn principally from old manuscripts, perhaps the chief labour consists in reading much that proves to be useless, but which must nevertheless be gone through before we can be sure of that disappointing fact. Sometimes, too, when we know where the golden fruit is to be found, the garden gates are kept by dragons who, looking on use as desecration, deem they nobly fulfil their duty to their treasures by jealously guarding them from human eye. Who has not experienced this in the search after truth? But there are also memories of those who have tried to pour light on darkness, to remove obstacles, to smooth difficulties, and, by words of sympathy and encouragement, have rendered invaluable aid. I should think no author ever forgot them.

It is my pleasing duty to acknowledge my obligations to Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart., who allowed me unlimited access to his inestimable collection of manuscripts; to Lord Houghton, for procuring me permission to examine another rich private collection; to the Rev. Edmund Kell, for a similar kindness; and to George Digby Wingfield Digby, Esq., for permission to engrave the portrait of Lady Arabella Stuart from the original miniature in his possession.

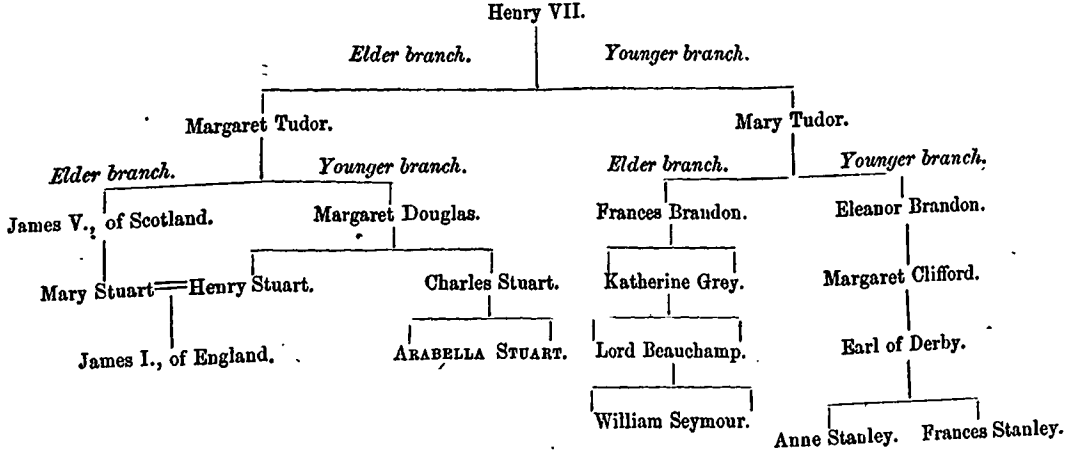
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DESCENT OF ARABELLA STUART AND WILLIAM SEYMOUR FROM HENRY VII.



CHAPTER I.

MARGARET DOUGLAS.

FOR more than two centuries the fragments of a mournful tale have floated down the records of English history. They relate to a woman of tender heart, of bright intellect, of graceful manners, of royal blood, and with no higher ambition than to be mistress of a private and peaceful home. Yet such was her untoward fate, that, without any design of her own, around her name gathered dark conspiracies both in England and in foreign lands; nobles, priests, kings, and even the pope himself, held her up as a terror to the reigning monarch, and as a prize to the most aspiring adventurers of the day. Guiltless of the crimes, enjoying none of the rewards, she suffered the utmost penalties of ambition, and among those who have been the most cruelly punished for the misfortunes of rank, she holds a foremost place. Never was a dearer price paid for royal blood than by the unfortunate Arabella Stuart.

As a rule, the ancestors of the subject of a biography are neither of interest nor importance to the reader. But here the case is different. It was because Arabella Stuart was the descendant of a King of England that her life was wrecked, and, without a clear understanding of her line of descent from this king, we cannot comprehend the source of the hopes of her ambitious friends on the one hand, and of the fears and precautions of her persecutors on the other.

Of the numerous family of Henry VII. of England only three survived him,—viz., Henry VIII., Margaret, who married James IV. of Scotland, and Mary, who became the wife of the French king, Louis XII. The line of Henry VIII. was extinguished with Queen Elizabeth, and it is principally of the descendants of Margaret and Mary that we shall have to speak.

The fatal battle of Flodden Field left Margaret a widow, with one son, who thus became James V. of Scotland. The grief of Margaret was of short duration; and on the 6th of August, 1514, she married Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, one of the handsomest noblemen in Scotland. A daughter was the fruit of this union, Margaret Douglas, who was born on the 7th of October, 1515.

The marriage of Queen Margaret and Angus

proved anything but happy, and, after twelve years of frequent separations and strife, the queen obtained a divorce, on the ground that Angus had had a wife and daughter living at the very time he was married to her. A reservation was, however, expressly made in favour of the child of Margaret and Angus, and the marriage was dissolved by the pope, with a clause inserted in the articles of divorce, declaring the young Margaret Douglas to have been born under a marriage *de facto* and *bonâ fide*, and consequently the lawful heiress of her parents.*

The discord of her parents had the effect of sending Margaret Douglas to find a home among her English relations, by whom, it may be remarked, her legitimacy was not questioned. She found a temporary asylum in the house of her aunt, Mary Tudor, Queen Dowager of France and Duchess of Suffolk, but was soon removed by Henry VIII. to Beaulieu, the residence of the young Princess Mary. At the birth of the Princess Elizabeth, Margaret Douglas was appointed her first lady of honour, and, encouraged by Anne Boleyn, an ardent attachment sprung up between Margaret and Lord Thomas Howard, younger brother of the Duke of Norfolk. If we may trust a letter written later by Queen

* "I myself have seen the bull."—Bishop Burnet.

Margaret, this attachment was sanctioned by Henry VIII. himself, and nothing is more probable than that, while under the influence of Anne Boleyn, he should have indulged her in the wish of uniting another member of her house with a scion of royal blood. The general inaccuracy, however, of Queen Margaret, renders her evidence always doubtful, unless supported by words of more reliable authority; and it is therefore possible that she outstepped the truth in saying that Henry had consented to a marriage between her daughter and Lord Howard. However that may be, the young couple, in the year 1536, were solemnly betrothed to each other.

The fall of Anne Boleyn shook her house to the foundation, and in July, 1536, Lord Thomas Howard and Margaret Douglas were committed to the Tower for betrothing themselves without the consent of the king. By the acts that rendered the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth illegitimate, the Lady Margaret Douglas was brought two degrees nearer the crown. And, according to the act which forbade the succession of an alien she was, after her mother, heiress presumptive, having been born on the English side of the Border. The act regarding the succession of aliens was indeed interpreted by most as applica-

ble to property rather than the inheritance of the crown, but so many understood it in its broadest sense, as to be a formidable party in the eyes of those who maintained the rights of the King of Scotland. This will be clearly seen by the following extract from the Act of attainder of Lord Thomas Howard:—

"It is lately sythen the beginning of this Parliament come to the knowledge of the King's Highness, that the Lord Thomas Howard, Brother to Thomas, now Duke of Norfolk, being led and seduced by the Devil, not having God afore his eyes, not regarding his duty of Allegiance that he oweth to have borne to the King our and his most dread Sovereign Lord, and as it is vehemently suspected and presumed, maliciously and traiterously minding and imagining, to put division in this Realme. And to interrupt, impedite, and let the said Succession of the Crown contrary to the limitation thereof mentioned in the said Act, hath now lately within the King's own Court and Mansion Place at Westminster, in the County of Middlesex, his Majesty there being for the affairs of his Parliament without the knowledge or assent of our said most dread Sovereign Lord the King, contemptuously and traitcrously contracted himself by crafty, fair, and flattering Words to and with the Lady Margaret Douglas,

being natural* Daughter to the Queen of Scots, eldest sister to our said Sovereign Lord; by the which it is vehemently to be suspected that the said Lord Thomas falsely, craftily, and traiterously hath imagined and compassed that in case our said Sovereign Lord should die without heirs of his body, which God defend, then the said Lord Thomas, by reason of marriage in so high a blood, and to one such which pretendeth† to be lawful Daughter to the said Queen of Scots, eldest sister of our said Sovereign Lord, should aspire by her to the Dignity of the said Imperial Crown of this Realm, or at the least making Division for the same by all likelihoods, having a firm hope and trust that the subjects of this Realm would incline and bear affection to the said Lady Margaret, *being born in this Realm*, and not to the King of Scots, her brother, to whom this Realm hath nor ever had any affection, but would resist his attempt to the Crown of this Realm to the uttermost of their powers, and for more likelihood and vehement suspicions of the said traiterous intent, the said Queen of Scots her mother, as it hath been lately bruted and

* "Natural" here means simply the daughter, without reference to legitimacy. It is constantly used in this sense in our old literature.

† Used in the sense of claimeth.

spoken, and come to the King's knowledge, hath coveted to come into this Realm, and to be restored and reconciled to the Earl Douglas, her late Husband and father to the said Lady Margaret, from whom she hath been long divorced by the Laws of the Church, minding by the same by all vehement presumptions and likelihoods to advance the said Lord Thomas and the said Lady Margaret, her Daughter, into the favour of the people of this Realm. By reason whereof, the traiterous intent of the said Lord Thomas might the sooner be brought to pass; which contemptuous and traiterous act of the said Lord Thomas soundeth and tendeth most highly to the King's dishonour, and to the great peril and bodily harm of his most royal person, and to plain and manifest danger of Interruption of the said Act, made for the limitation of the King's Succession. In consideration whereof and for avoiding of all doubts, suspects, and ambiguities that may come and grow to this Realm by reason of the premises, and for speedy and due punishment to be had of this most contemptuous and traiterous offence, committed against the King's Highness and the Realm, and to the peril of derogacion and interruption of the said good and wholesome Act of Succession, and for example to offenders in such cases. And also forasmuch as the said offence

is done and committed within the time of this present Parliament, and in the King's own Court and House, his Grace there being for affairs of his Parliament. It may therefore please the King's Highness, at the most humble intercession of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and the Commons, in their present Parliament assembled, that it may be enacted, by authority of the same, that the said offence shall be adjudged and deemed High Treason, and that the said Lord Thomas Howard, for his said offence, shall be attainted of High Treason, and shall have and suffer such pains and execution of Death to all intents and purposes, as in cases of high treason."*

Thus this Act especially acknowledges the popular feeling in favour of a successor *born in the realm*, to the exclusion of a nearer heir born on foreign soil.

It was followed immediately by another statute, to which the reader's attention is especially called, seeing that we shall have occasion to refer to it hereafter:—

"And be it further enacted by authority aforesaid, that if any Man of what estate, degree, or condition soever he be, at any time hereafter take upon him to espouse, marry, or take to his wife any of the

* Statutes of the Realm, Henry VIII. chap. xxiv.

King's children (being lawfully born or otherwise commonly reputed or taken for his children), or any of the King's Sisters or Aunts of the part of the Father (or any of the lawful children) of the king's Brothers or Sisters (not being married), or contract marriage with any of them, without the special license, assent, consent, and agreement first thereunto had and obtained of the King's Highness in writing under his great seal, shall be deemed and adjudged a Traitor to the King and to his Realm, and that every such offence hereafter to be done, made, or perpetrated contrary to this Act, shall be adjudged and deemed to be High Treason; and that every man so offending and their abettors, procurers, comforters, counsellors, and aiders, being lawfully confict of any such offence according to the laws of this Realm, shall have and suffer such like pains and execution of Death, losses of privilege, of Sanctuary, and forfeitures of Lands, Tenants, and Hereditaments to all intents and purposes, as in cases of High Treason appertaineth. Saving to all and every person and persons, bodies politic and corporate, their heirs and successors, and to the heirs and successors of every of them, other than the said Lord Thomas Howard and his heirs, and all other persons which shall fortune hereafter to be attainted by authority of

this Act, and their heirs and every of them, all such right, title, interest, possession, leases, annuities, rent, service, revisions, remainders, offices, fees, commons conditions and other commodities, profits, and Hereditaments, in such manner, form, quality, and condition as they or any of them have had, should or might have had, if this Act had never been had nor made, anything in this present act to the contrary thereof notwithstanding.

"Provided alway and be it enacted, that in every such case before rehearsed the Woman (after the last day of this Parliament) so offending, being within the degrees before specified, shall incur like danger and penalty as is before limited, and shall suffer such like Death and Punishment as is before appointed, to the man offending in manner and form expressed in this Act."*

Modern historians sometimes cast a longing, hankering glance back to the happy days of Henry VIII. It is possible that the two lovers would have thrown an equally yearning gaze down to our own time, could they have foreseen the change between the two periods. Though the above statute was not passed till *after* the crime of betrothal was committed, Lord Thomas Howard was attainted of High Treason,

* Statutes of the Realm, Henry VIII. chap. xxiv.

and this Act of attainder actually precedes in the statute-book the very Act he is supposed to offend against.

Lord Howard and Margaret Douglas were immediately thrown into separate prisons in the Tower, where they both fell dangerously ill of the intermittent fever that was one of the minor punishments of the State prison.

In November, Margaret was removed to Sion Abbey, where she remained till the birth of Prince Edward deprived her of the invidious chance of being considered heiress presumptive to the crown; and her danger decreasing with her rank, she was set at liberty by the king. But Lord Thomas Howard, who had been allowed no change from the damp air of the Tower, sunk under his disease, and died a prisoner on the 31st of October, 1537. His noble relative, the poet Earl of Surrey, ascribes his death to his pining for the love of Margaret. It is to be feared, however, that this romance is ill founded, and that physical ailments were the cause of Howard's death. Disappointed love will cause murder and suicide, it will render men moody and irritable, it will destroy their energies, their ambitions, will plunge them into dissipation, and send them to seek oblivion for a time in foreign lands; but I am unaware of a single authentic

instance of a man *dying* of a broken heart for the love of the fairest woman that ever existed.

With slight interruptions, Margaret Douglas retained the favour of Henry VIII., who, in the thirtieth year of her age, married her to one of the proudest nobles of Scotland, Matthew Earl of Lennox, in order, by this alliance, to detach the powerful earl from Scotland, and make him a creature of his own. Lennox agreed to surrender the castles of Dumbarton and Rothesay, to be a faithful servant of the king, to deliver up the whole island of Bute, to do his best to place the infant Queen of Scots in the power of Henry, and finally to settle, from his Scotch possessions, the following lands on his bride.

"First, the land of Glenrinne, Balloch, and Arlthinturlees, with all their appurtenances, lying in the Earldom of Lennox and Sheriffdom of Dumbarton. Likewise all the baronies of Chukespe, Tuchilune, Craig of Nielstone, lying within the lordship of Darnley and Chiefdom of Renfrell. Thirdly, with all the lands of Erere, lying in the Sheriffdom of Perht, to the yearly value of Five hundred marks sterling over and above all charges."*

In return for this, as poor Margaret was quite penniless, and possessed nothing but what she

* Rymer's "Fœdera," xv. p. 30.

owed to her English relations, Henry agreed to settle on her and the Earl and *their heirs*, "lands and possessions in the realm of England to the clear yearly value of seventeen hundred marks sterling."* Early in the next year, Margaret, now Countess of Lennox, became the mother of a son, who survived his birth but nine months; but on the 7th of December, 1545, at Temple Newsome, Margaret gave birth to the father of the race, who, to the present day, wear the British crown, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, and (several children dying in the interval) eleven years later, her youngest son, Charles, was born.

The short and woeful career of Darnley is well known. Charles came in a later period, when the misfortunes of his parents prevented them from bestowing the care and expense on his education that rendered his brother Darnley one of the most accomplished fops of the day. All the Scotch estates of the Earl of Lennox had been confiscated on account of his treason, and this, added to his unsettled life, afforded a poor chance for the youngest son.

At six years of age, Charles was a prisoner with his mother, who had provoked the jealousy of Elizabeth by some unguarded expressions con-

* Rymer's "Fœdera," xv. p. 30.

cerning the Queen of Scots, and was in consequence placed in custody at Sheen.

On the marriage of Darnley with the Queen of Scots, Margaret was lodged in the Tower, and Charles, who was then only nine years old, was committed by Queen Elizabeth to the charge of Lady Knevet. Care was taken of his health, and one or two attendants were allowed him; but the imprisonment of his mother and the absence of his father, who was constantly engaged in warfare in Scotland, had the necessary effect on Charles, and in 1571, when Margaret, released from prison, found herself a widow, the neglected state of the education of her youngest son was a source of regret and anxiety. Charles was of an affectionate and gentle nature, but he was deficient in the accomplishments befitting the son of a nobleman; and Margaret, therefore, wrote to Sir William Cecil beseeching him to take her only remaining hope into his house, there to be educated in a manner becoming his rank, and there possibly to escape the animosity that the too prominent characters of her husband and eldest son had provoked, and with it, their untimely deaths.*

It is uncertain whether Sir William Cecil complied with this request. He, at any rate,

* "Life of Lady Margaret Douglas," by Miss Strickland.

appointed a Protestant tutor named Malliet, who spoke of Charles as just entering on his sixteenth year, and as giving "hopes of great promise for the future," more, however, on account of his proximity to the throne than for any signs of genius or proficiency.

On the 18th of April, 1572, James granted the earldom of Lennox to Charles Stuart *and his heirs*, without condition or restriction, and on the 2nd of May, 1572, Queen Elizabeth wrote a letter to the Earl of Mar, Regent of Scotland, thanking him for this proof of the king's kindness to her kinsman, Charles Stuart.*

A prospect of peace and competence seemed at last to unfold before Margaret Lennox, and a promise of repose to welcome her declining years. She and her son settled to reside in their house at Hackney,† where we will hope that Charles applied himself diligently to his studies, and made up as far as possible for lost time, till his watchful mother, thinking it necessary to look out for a wife for him, obtained the queen's permission to pay a visit to Scotland. On the 9th of October, 1574, when Charles was

* Letter of Queen Elizabeth.—State Papers, Scotch Series, May 2, 1572. MS.

† See Appendix II. 1.

nineteen years of age, the mother and son departed for the north.

Travelling was slow work in those days; the bad roads were a painful and wearisome hindrance, and, as horseback was the usual mode of locomotion, even for aged ladies, a comfortable resting-place was especially to be desired after a long day's journey. And when Margaret Lennox and her son had arrived near Derbyshire, they found a house thrown open to them, whose inmates gave them so hearty a reception, so royal a welcome, that we must leave the travellers awhile to rest, and give some account of their hospitable hosts.

CHAPTER II.

BESS OF HARDWICK.

BY the side of the magnificent building in Derbyshire known as Hardwick Hall, may still be seen a hoary ruin, overgrown with moss and ivy, and carpeted with grass and weeds. In the reign of King Henry VIII. this ruin was a comfortable dwelling, inhabited by a country gentleman of ancient family, of the name of John Hardwick, and by Elizabeth, his wife. Hardwick was also the name of the estate of about four hundred acres, on which the owner dwelt, and where his ancestors had flourished for five or six generations. John Hardwick was the father of a numerous family, of whom by far the most attractive and prominent was Elizabeth, or, as she was irreverently styled, "Bess of Hardwick." Bess was very fair in person, with a delicate complexion, bright, sparkling hazel eyes, that changed colour with every light, and expression with every feeling; light auburn hair, and aquiline nose; white, taper hands, and a slim,

graceful figure, of middle height. Only the rather sharp chin and thin, red lips seemed to speak of other things than the contour, taken altogether, at first expressed.* But Bess had something more than good looks. She was one of the best—perhaps the very best—housekeeper in the county. Brewing, baking, cooking, drying herbs, and keeping accounts† strictly, were done to perfection under her direction, and woe to the unlucky servant who neglected to brew "bere" for her own "drynkynge," or forgot to provide due store of charcoal and wood, or allowed the floors to remain unplastered, or the windows to be broken during the absence of their mistress. Forbidding all "superfleueté or waste of anythinge," she would yet have all that was "needfoulle and nesesary," and all in such good order, that, without doubt, as far as creature comforts went, whenever Bess ruled, there was a comfortable house.‡

Bess was quite aware that these qualities and her sprightly manners and appearance formed by far the largest part of her fortune, for her father, though able to maintain a good establishment for

* Her portrait may still be seen at Hardwick Hall.

† These are still to be seen in her own handwriting at Hardwick.

‡ See her letter in Hunter's "History of Sheffield."

his family when its members were all under his roof together, could not afford to give them more than forty marks, or not quite twenty-seven pounds, apiece for their dowries.* It may be thought that the skill of Bess in management would have made her an excellent wife to a poor gentleman, or one who needed a little income to go a long way; but Bess had no inclination for that kind of thing. Talent and economy can be shown in the ordering of a large as well as a small sum, and the leanings of Bess were most decidedly in the former direction. Had Tacitus described her at this period of her life, it would probably have been as "not despicable in point of morals, save that she believed poverty to be the chief of evils."†

Bess was only fourteen years old when an influential connexion of her family, named Lady Zouch, gave her an invitation to London, which was readily accepted. But Bess was not the only visitor. At the house of Lady Zouch was a young gentleman named Robert Barlow, of Barlow, and one of the richest landholders in Derbyshire. When Bess arrived at the house of Lady Zouch, Mr. Barlow was confined to his chamber with a chronic complaint, and the

* "Archæologia," vol. xxxii. p. 80.

† Tacitus, "Annals."

sympathies of Bess were soon enlisted on behalf of the wealthy sufferer. She speedily became his nurse, arranged his diet and medicines, and, by her unremitting attentions, converted his sick-room into a habitation of light and hope. His health gradually improved, and with health came the resolution to offer himself and his fortune to his devoted nurse.* Her consent was soon obtained. A will was made, by which the whole of Barlow's possessions were secured to Bess and her heirs, and, at the age of fourteen, she became the wife of Barlow. But his happiness was of short duration. On the 2nd of February, 1533,† Barlow died, leaving Bess a young, charming, and wealthy widow. No record remains of her grief for her husband; yet though, without doubt, she had many suitors, Bess remained a widow for fourteen years. The probability is, that, having secured wealth with her first husband, she required wealth and title with the second, and her youth and riches allowed her ample time to wait for the attainment of this object.

At the end of fourteen years, the destined

* "MS. History of George, Earl of Shrewsbury," by Nathaniel Johnstone, M.D., quoted by Miss Costello, "Eminent Englishwomen," vol. i.

† Collins' "Peerage."

suitor appeared. Sir William Cavendish was the second son of Thomas Cavendish, a gentleman "who, after the example of his ancestors, took to the study of the laws," and became clerk of the Pipe in the Exchequer in the reign of King Henry VIII. William received "divers lands in Suffolk" from his father, and, what was far better, a liberal education, which still further advanced him, till Henry VIII. took notice of him, and constituted him one of the commissioners for visiting and receiving the surrenders of some of the monasteries.

"Then he came in his might, with King Henry's right,
To turn church lands to lay,
With sword in hand, and torch to light
Their walls, if they said nay."

In this capacity he received the seals of the monasteries of Sheen and St. Albans. In 1539, he was made one of the auditors of the Court of Augmentation,* and, in consideration of his services, received a grant to himself, to Margaret his wife, and his heirs and assigns, of the lordships and manors of Northawe, Cuffeley and Chyldewyke in Hertfordshire. Soon after, his wife died, leaving him four daughters. He did not long remain unmarried, but took for his second

* So called because the King's revenue was much augmented by the monastery lands.

wife Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Conyngsby, and widow of Sir William Paris. She soon died, leaving him two daughters. His worldly prosperity still increased.

He was made treasurer of the chamber to the king, and received the honour of knighthood. The death of Henry made no difference to his good fortune. Edward VI. continued him in all his offices, and made him a member of his Privy Council. Widowhood had no charms for Cavendish, and the fair young relict of Barlow, who was at least twenty years his junior, irresistibly attracted him, chiefly, it is said, by her beauty,* but probably quite as much by her intelligence and winsome manners. The marriage took place at Brodgate, in Leicestershire, a seat of the Marquis of Dorset, on the 20th of August, 1547, "at two of the clock after midnight."† Cavendish was no less yielding than Barlow to the enchanting Bess. At her desire, he sold his southern estates and bought new land in Derbyshire, where her own friends and kindred were settled. And now Bess became not only a hopeful mother of sons and daughters, but one of the most important personages in her native county.

Among the visitors at the baptisms of her

* Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle.

† Diary of Sir William Cavendish.

eight children, we find the names of the Duke and Duchess of Suffolk, the Marchioness of Northampton, the Marquis of Winchester, the Earls of *Shrewsbury*, Pembroke, and Warwick; Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, the Ladies Jane and *Katherine Grey*, and even the Queen's Majesty herself, acting as sponsor by proxy.* For her children, Bess manifested that fierce affection which is shown less in care for their moral and spiritual well-being, than by pushing them forward in the world, and striving to exalt and enrich them without let or hindrance, and very often at the expense of honesty and justice. As they were all born within ten years after her marriage, we might suppose her time to be fully occupied, without any other cares to distract her. But Bess was not one of those women who do nothing "for want of time." Her household was as rigidly and comfortably managed as ever, and her steward's accounts as carefully revised and signed by her own hand as when she was the unencumbered Mistress Barlow. She became a builder on a large scale. Ambitious of leaving to posterity a worthy and solid memorial of her presence in Derbyshire, and fixing her eye on the estate of "Chattesworthes,"† then in

* Hunter's "Sheffield."

† Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle.

possession of the family of the Leeches, who were her near relations, she easily prevailed on her husband to buy it, and begin to build a mansion, which is now represented and succeeded by the ducal palace of Chatsworth.

Before the house was finished, Sir William Cavendish died, on the 25th of October, 1557, and Bess was again a widow, but now of the discreet age of forty. Though sincerely attached to her second husband, and marking him in her register as her "most dear and well-beloved, on whose soule I most humbly beseech the Lord to have mercy, and to rid me and his poor children out of our great misery," Bess in due time allowed herself to be consoled. Nor must we accuse her of special want of feeling on that account. In the times in which she lived, it was a rare thing for either man or woman to remain in a state of widowhood, if possessed of even moderate attractions, and the criticisms which in the present age would pursue a lady marrying for the third time, would, in the days of Bess, have awakened astonishment at the critic rather than contempt at the criticised. Bess only acted like the most beautiful and celebrated women of her day—women over whom poets and historians have thrown a halo of refined romance and admiration. Mary Stuart, Lettice Knollys, and the Queens

Margaret Tudor and Catherine Parr, were equally fickle, the chief difference between them and Bess being, that their influence over their successive consorts was far inferior to hers. Nor is it fairer to blame her for the unlimited sway she held over those nearest to her. When aided by affection, it is a law as irrevocable as the law of gravity, that the stronger shall govern the weaker mind. This principle has at all times been a source of irritation to common spectators unable to probe it to its spring; and therefore, while some in ancient times called it Witchcraft, and others later on have stigmatized it as "a domineering spirit," "an overbearing will, &c.," the simple truth has nearly always been overlooked, that it is not for the power, but the use of the power, that the possessor is responsible. Happy is that weak mortal who can repose his frailty in the strength of a high and generous spirit, which, by using its heaven-born influence, shall preserve its friend from the infections of a thousand meaner minds. Only when this gift—inseparable as the personal presence—is perverted and made a tool of evil, can it be justly assailed. And how the widow of Cavendish used it, we shall presently see.

Four years had not passed since the death of "her dear and well-beloved," when a third lover,

if possible more ardent and devoted than the former two, laid himself at her feet. This was Sir William Saintlow, the handsome Captain of the Guard to Queen Elizabeth, and Grand Butler of England, the possessor of "divers fair lordships in Gloucestershire," and, to the annoyance of Bess, sundry encumbrances in the shape of daughters by a former wife. Bess was quite at home in the matter of marriage settlements, and before she would consent to bestow her hand on the enamoured knight, she demanded that the whole of the "fair lordships" in Gloucestershire should be settled, in default of issue by her third marriage, on herself and children by Sir William Cavendish, to the entire exclusion of the just claimants—the eldest daughters of Sir William Saintlow.* Base as was this demand on her part, she yet thought of her offspring, and it is with still greater contempt that we read that, rather than give her up, the knight yielded, and disinheriting and forsaking his own children for the Delilah, he conferred on her the title of Lady Saintlow. Whether his children inherited his own baseness of spirit, or whether, brought in such close contact, they, like others, were compelled to yield to the immutable law, we cannot say. Certain it is that the insulted

* Collins' "Noble Families."

daughters of Saintlow maintained the most friendly intercourse with their step-mother, accepted her patronage in lieu of their rights, and lived in harmony with the Cavendish children, for whose sake they had been despoiled. But Death, at least, was jealous, and after a short union, Saintlow died, leaving Bess sole heiress of all his property, and leaving no children by his last marriage, his rich estates joined those of Barlow and Cavendish, and descended to the heirs of Bess.

It might now be fairly supposed that Bess had received her full measure at the hand of Fortune, or that the knowledge of the contract concerning Sir William Saintlow's estates, as well as her mature age—for she was now fifty—would have cooled her admirers as well as diminished her fascinations. Nothing of the kind. "In this third widowhood she had not survived her charms of wit and beauty," and by far the greatest conquest was to come. During the lives of her former husbands, she had turned her wealth to great account—had taken her place at Court, and, as we have seen at the christening-parties of her children, had established herself on intimate terms with the noblest families of the kingdom. At one of those famous christening-parties came the greatest and most trusted of the nobles

of England—George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. Since then, he had probably kept up a friendly intercourse with Bess, the nearness of his castle at Sheffield making him a frequent neighbour, and, like all the men around her, he was struck with her wondrous energy and skill in management. She did not indulge the "luxury of grief," but solaced her widowhood with the sound of the hammer and the saw, with farming, buying and selling estates, transacting business in lead, coals, and timber,* and astonishing the spectators with the "byldinges"—the object of "my workes," as she herself styles them.

Earl George was the first Protestant of the house of Talbot; his wealth was great, his connexions among the highest in the land, but, like Saintlow, he was burdened with a family. Yet the voice of the syren had but to sound, and his wife, having been dead a year, he laid himself and all his unentailed possessions at the feet of Bess. Fortunately, he had sons as well as daughters, and Bess saw that it would be impossible to secure so clear a bargain as she had driven with the infatuated Saintlow. So she took a middle and prudent course. She declared that, in addition to a splendid jointure settled on herself, it was necessary that her eldest son,

* Lodge, i.

Henry Cavendish, should espouse the Earl's daughter, Grace, and her youngest daughter, Mary, be joined to Gilbert, the heir of Earl George, thus irrevocably linking the fortunes of the two houses of Cavendish and Talbot, and affording the best prospects of high connexions for such of her children as were still undisposed of. The Earl consented to all these arrangements, and the fourth marriage of the unconquerable Bess was celebrated with as much pomp and affection—at least, on the part of the bridegroom—as if Bess were still the blooming girl who, at the age of fourteen, had bewitched the heart of Robert Barlow. Even Queen Elizabeth, so usually jealous of the marriage of her nobles, signified her approbation, and declared that, "glad as she had been to see Mistress Saintlow, she should be still more rejoiced to see my Lady of Shrewsbury." Time passed on, and, as yet, Earl George was not behind his predecessors in his devotion to his wonderful Bess. Still, "of all earthly joys that had happened unto him, he thanked God chiefest for her."* Even yet her cup of honour was not full. On the 17th of May, 1568, Mary, Queen of Scots, landed in England—a refugee from her country. It is here no place to discuss the question of her im-

* Letter of the Earl of Shrewsbury.—Hunter's "Sheffield."

prisonment, or the vengeance which the mother of Darnley had implored Elizabeth to take. Suffice it to say that the Queen of Scots was placed in charge of the Earl of Shrewsbury, with strict orders that none save his wife and himself were to hold intercourse with her, and Bess became the gaoler of a queen. And it was while this queen was in her custody that the aged mother of the murdered Darnley was travelling to the north, in search of a wife for her son Charles, that Bess, who had a charming unmarried daughter, hearing of the journey, and that the royal travellers would pass near her house at Rufford, made such royal preparations, and offered such princely hospitality, that, as the Countess of Lennox said, for very courtesy sake they must needs accept it, and rest awhile with the Countess of Shrewsbury.

Bess was well rewarded for her hospitality. Not many days elapsed before Charles Stuart was captivated by the charms of Elizabeth Cavendish, who, though lately disappointed in love, like her mother, was open to consolation. Very scanty glimpses are afforded of her, but the few that remain seem to give the idea of a gentle, affectionate girl, entirely under the sway of her mother, to whom, unlike her sister Mary, the wife of Gilbert Talbot, she seems to have borne

no resemblance in the sterner parts of her character.

The Earl of Shrewsbury, writing to Lord Burleigh at this time, gives a comical account of the state of affairs:—

"The Lady Lennox, being as I heard sickly, rested her at Rufford five days, and kept most her bedchamber. And in that time the young man her son fell into liking with my wife's daughter before intended, and such liking was between them as my wife tells me she makes no doubt of a match, and hath so tied themselves upon their own liking as cannot part. My wife hath sent him to my lady, and the young man is so far in love that belike he is sick without her. This taking effect, I shall be well at quiet, for there is few noblemen's sons in England that she hath not prayed me to deal for at one time or other, for my Lord Wharton and sundry others. And now this comes unlooked-for without thanks to me."*

* This letter is printed in Howard's Collection, who refers it to the Cotton MSS., Cal. C. 3. I have examined this MS., but the letter is not to be found; nor have I succeeded in obtaining the original. It bears, however, such internal marks of authenticity that I have not hesitated to use it. The mutilated transcript will be well understood by those unhappy readers who have sought to decipher the handwriting and spelling of the noble George of Shrewsbury.—E.C.

Bess did not let matters wait till they should reach the ear of the Queen, who would be certain to forbid such a match, and the marriage was solemnized during the visit of Charles and his mother. No objection seems to have been made by the Countess of Lennox. She had suffered enough by the marriage of her eldest son to reconcile her to a lowlier alliance for Charles; nor was it likely that the only son of the widow would find his happiness thwarted by the mother whose hopes rested on him alone. Margaret had found no happiness from her royal blood, and possibly she saw a vista of peace in the unambitious hopes of Charles. Without doubt, too, Bess used all her charms and fascinations, and convinced the noble visitors that happiness, at least, was to be found in her domain.

But peace was soon at an end. When the news of the marriage arrived at Court, Queen Elizabeth instantly summoned Margaret and her son from the north, uttering threats of imprisonment in the Tower to all concerned in the marriage. The Earl of Shrewsbury, declaring that the marriage was "dealt in suddenly" and without his knowledge, and being besides necessary as keeper to Mary, Queen of Scots, was allowed to remain; but Bess began to find her

speculation threaten dangers; and, with the rest, she also was summoned to London. The dismal bridal-party travelled by slow and painful journeys on horseback in the depth of winter, over bad roads, and at last arrived trembling at the end of their journey. Where Bess remained is not mentioned, probably she accompanied the other three to Hackney, the residence of Margaret. At first, the royal command went no farther than forbidding the culprits to stir from their place of abode, and to speak to any save those whom the Privy Council allowed to listen. But sterner orders followed, and a few days after Christmas, the two mothers, Margaret and Bess, were lodged in the Tower. The sensation of imprisonment was unpleasant to Bess, who, however, controlled herself, and submitted with a good grace. But Margaret gave utterance to her feelings, and said: "Thrice have I been cast into prison, not for matters of treason, but for love matters. First, when Thomas Howard, son to Thomas first Duke of Norfolk, was in love with myself; then for the love of Henry Darnley, my son, to Queen Mary of Scotland; and, lastly, for the love of Charles, my younger son, to Elizabeth Cavendish."

The Earl of Shrewsbury wrote anxious letters in behalf both of his wife and Margaret.

Leicester, Burghley, and the Queen herself were addressed by him. He declared that Bess had no intent but that of "reverent dutie," and that the Lady Lennox had conducted herself in all respects as a loyal subject.* His words may have had some effect. A commission was granted by the Queen to the Earl of Huntingdon to hold a court and examine Fowler and all the servants of Margaret concerning the marriage. The trial proceeded slowly, but eventually was decided in favour of the prisoners, and both were released. But meantime, Elizabeth, the young Countess of Lennox, had become the mother of a daughter, the heiress of the house of Lennox, and known in history as ARABELLA STUART.

* Lodge, iii.

CHAPTER III.

THE BIRTH OF ARABELLA STUART.

THE precise date of the birth of Arabella Stuart has long been a matter of uncertainty. The most reliable authorities have believed it to have been somewhere in the year 1575. This is placed beyond all doubt by the following extract from a letter of Margaret, Countess of Lennox, to Mary, Queen of Scots. The letter is written from Hackney, where the young Countess was staying with her mother-in-law, and is endorsed November 10, 1575:—

"And now must I yield your Majesty most humble thanks for your good remembrance and bounty to our little daughter here, who some day may serve your highness. Almighty God grant unto your Majesty an happy life.—Hackney, this 10th of November.

"Your Majesty's most humble and loving mother and aunt,

"M. L."*

* State Papers, Mary, Queen of Scots, x. Printed in Miss Strickland's "Queens of Scotland."

To this letter is added a postscript by Elizabeth Lennox, which is here given as one of the few remains of the mother of Arabella Stuart:—

"I most humbly thank your Majesty that it pleased your highness to remember me your poor servant, both with a token and in my lady's gracious letter, which is not little to my comfort. I can but wish and pray God for your Majesty's long and happy estate till time I may do your Majesty better service, which I think long to do, and shall always be as ready thereto as any servant your Majesty hath, according as by duty I am bound. I beseech your highness pardon these rude lines, and accept the good heart of the writer, who loves and honours your Majesty unfeignedly.

"Your Majesty's most humble and lowly servant during life,

"E. LENNOX."

In addition to the letter of Margaret may be added another testimony from the Harleian Manuscripts.* Amongst a curious collection of pedigrees, entitled "*Genealogia Regum Angliæ*, 1582," is given that of Margaret Douglas and her posterity. Of Darnley is it said, "*Occisus*

* Harl. MSS., fol. 588.

est in Scotiâ a Comite Bodel, ex insidiis, ob causam Davidis Italici, a Secretis Reginæ." By this stands "*Carolus Stuard, natus* 1548, *Comes Lenox, Anglus, duxit filiam Gulielmi Candish Militis in Anglia de Chatsworth.*" After Charles comes "*Arbella, nata* 1575 *apud Chatsw*th *in Anglia.*" It is remarkable that in both places the word *Chatsworth* is written in different ink, having evidently been added afterwards when the desired information was obtained. At another part of the volume is an extract of the Scotch pedigrees, written in the last-mentioned ink. And here we find "*Arbella nata* 1575 *apud Catworth in Anglia,*" without hesitation. Many wrong dates occur in these pedigrees, but that relating to Arabella so entirely agrees with other circumstances that it may safely be relied on. The care evidently taken concerning her birthplace, renders the information given worthy of trust.

The baptism of Arabella was, in all probability, celebrated at the parish church of Edensor, according to the custom of the day, which enjoined the highest in rank to be baptised in the parish church, the castle chapel being considered too private for so important a ceremony, except when the sickliness of the infant rendered a removal dangerous, or when the delay of an hour might peril the salvation of the stranger. In such im-

minent danger, the nurse received a license from the bishop to perform the ceremony herself.

In the case of Arabella, there was happily no need of such a departure from the ordinary course, and we may be sure that Bess left out none of the observances due to the royal rank of her little grandchild. On all such occasions, the whole of the family, with the visitors, went in procession to the church, where, on arriving at the porch, they were met by the clergyman, and a short prayer being offered, the child was named. It was then carried to the font, which stood under a canopy in the middle of the church. The water in the font was consecrated, and, being covered up to keep it from pollution, it was not deemed necessary to change it for every ceremony, but the waste was gradually supplied, and a regular consecration every month was deemed sufficient to keep it in holy order. On arriving at the font, a prayer was offered to Jesus Christ, beseeching Him to send down the Holy Spirit to sanctify the fountain of baptism, even as the Holy Spirit had descended in the form of a dove in times of old on His divine person. Till the time of Elizabeth, the custom was to dip the child in the water thrice; first on the right side, then on the left, and lastly, with its face into the font, the three immersions being supposed to

represent the Trinity. But in the reign of Elizabeth immersion was superseded by sprinkling—a change brought by the returned exiles from Geneva, and it was probably in this manner that Arabella received the first sacrament. Immediately after the baptism, the sponsors placed their hands on the child, and the minister covering it with a white vestment called the chrysome, said, "Take this white vestment as a token of the innocency which, by God's grace, in this holy sacrament of baptism, is given unto thee, and for a sign, whereby thou art admonished, so long as thou livest, to give thyself to innocence of living, that, after this transitory life, thou mayest be a partaker of the life everlasting." The child was next anointed (a relic of the Catholic service), and the sponsors offered their gifts—generally articles in gold or silver; refreshments were then brought into the church, consisting of wafers, comfits, and hippocras, a rich spiced wine (another relic of the old monks), and the company having freely partaken, the procession re-formed, and the presents of the sponsors being carried before the child, the company returned to the hall or castle, where the day was concluded in feasting and festivity. Of the sponsors of Arabella, the only ones whose names I have been able to discover, are her uncle, Wil-

liam Cavendish, and her aunt, Mary, the wife of Gilbert Talbot, though she probably had many more, sponsors being quite unlimited at that time.

From the first year of her existence, a cloud seemed to settle over the devoted head of Arabella. The royal frown was scarcely withdrawn from her two grandmothers, before a still darker shadow fell over her father. Consumption fastened slowly upon him, and in the beginning of the year 1577, he sank into an early grave, leaving behind him a young widow and a child of two years old, bereft, indeed, of their natural protector, but, as might be supposed, surrounded by relations and connexions too powerful to leave cause to fear any other consequences than those arising from natural affection and grief. It proved far otherwise.

The age in which the lot of Arabella Stuart was cast was one in which might almost invariably conquered right; it was an age when, though Parliament might resist encroachments on the public welfare on a large scale, and the Queen could trust herself without guards in the midst of a worshipping people, yet individual liberty and personal claims stood on very frail grounds indeed. Men rode to battle like lions against a foreign foe in fields where renown and honours were to be openly awarded;

but they could be very quiet in other matters at home, that were utterly opposed to all law and justice, and needed bold speaking rather than sharp swords. Tournaments still existed, but chivalry was a mere name. No distressed damsel found a knight-errant then. All Englishmen were ready to dare anything for the Queen; none would openly brave her anger, or plead a cause against her.

The death of Charles Lennox plunged his whole family into poverty. The estates settled by Henry VIII. on the father and mother of Charles and *their heirs*, were now seized and sequestered by Queen Elizabeth, and Arabella was thus deprived of her English possessions. The Scotch estates would have been a sufficient heritage to maintain her as a princess, and to these estates she had an undoubted right. The earldom of Lennox had, in 1572, been conferred by James VI. on Charles Stuart and *his heirs*, without reservation or condition. The gift was sanctioned by the Earl of Mar, then Regent, and by an Act of Parliament confirming it in every particular.

This claim was now immediately asserted by the relations of Arabella. Her grandmother Lennox wrote to Lord Ruthven,* to know if the child's

* State Papers, Scotch Series, vol. xxviii. fol. 3. MS.

title was to be acknowledged, and a petition was presented to the Earl of Mar, to grant the wardship of the lands of Lennox to the countess. The petition was bluntly refused, and the title of Arabella questioned. It was in vain that the just plea was urged, that the title had been granted to Charles and *his heirs for ever* by the King, and confirmed by the Regent, and the whole state of Scotland by Act of Parliament.

The Regent answered that "the admission of the Lady Arabella to the earldom of Lennox, although there were no other doubt, could not now be accomplished, for that by the death of her father, the earldom falleth into the King's hands by reason of ward, and cannot be admitted before eighteen years of age, and that he had rather the King should make choice whom of his so near kinsfolks he would prefer." * To this the Regent added the cheering words, that "the same gift of the earldom, made by the Earl of Mar, then Regent, under the great seal of Scotland, and also by Act of Parliament, may by the King be revoked at any time, either within age or at full age."

James had already declared his intention of "revoking" the gift, and of making a present of the inheritance of Arabella to his favourite

* Harl. MSS. 289, fol. 201.

and cousin, Esme Stuart, Lord D'Aubigny, proposing, however, to compromise matters by marrying Arabella to the new possessor. But as Arabella was only two years old, and as it was certain that Queen Elizabeth would refuse her consent to such a betrothal, the recompense was justly regarded as a farce, while the robbery, for it can be called nothing else, was an imminent fact. The earldom of Angus and the dower lands settled by Mathew, Earl of Lennox, on his wife, had been confiscated, and thus she and her little granddaughter were left absolutely penniless, so far as the claims of Lennox were concerned. One hope remained,—the Earl of Leicester was one of the most fervent admirers of Bess of Hardwick. He spoke in raptures of her "noble and wise governmcnt of herself at Courte;"* and having experienced her hospitality at Buxton and Chatsworth, had given so glowing an account of it, that Queen Elizabeth herself had written to thank the Earl of Shrewsbury for the entertainment of her favourite. To him, therefore, the widowed Elizabeth Stuart now wrote, beseeching him to intercede with Queen Elizabeth to use her powerful influence in behalf of Arabella.

Leicester, however, was cautious. He thought

* Lodge, ii. p. 149.

the present time not propitious, as will be seen by the following extract from a letter of Gilbert Talbot to the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury:

"I shewed the letter of my lady of Lennox, your daughter, to my Lord of Leicester, who said he thought it far better for him to defer her suits to her Majesty till his own coming to the Court than otherwise to write to her before; for that he thinketh her Majesty will suppose his letter, if he should write, were but at your ladyship's request, and so by another letter would straight answer it again, and so it do no good. But at his meeting your lady, he will, he saith, advise in what sort your lordship shall write to the Queen's Majesty, which he will carry unto her, and then be as earnest a solicitor therein as ever he was for anything in his life, and he doubteth not to prevail to your lordship's contentation."*

Thus this important matter was left undecided for some time, and the young widow, with her child, was left dependent on her own family, and compelled to feel that her alliance with royal blood had been barren enough as far as wealth and magnificence were concerned.

It was at this time that the first portrait of Arabella was taken, which may still be seen in the picture-gallery at Hardwick Hall. The

* Hunter's "Sheffield."

face is infantine, but highly intelligent, and the portrait possesses a pathos that, despite the outrageous costume of the subject, inspires the gazer with interest, even without the knowledge of her history. False red hair, drawn over rolls, in the French fashion of the present day; a figured brocade cap of a fashion becoming a woman of sixty, fastened round her head by a band of gold and gems; a brocade dress, embroidered with pink flowers and green leaves, and made high at the neck, covered with a cape-like collar of the same material; immense sleeves, fastened round the wrists with bracelets, a chain twisted several times round the neck, and sustaining a jewel, with a device, representing a scroll encircling a heart, surmounted with a coronet, and bearing the motto, "POUR PARVENIR J'ENDURE,"—all these deform the little being, whose innocent face presents a ludicrous contrast to her dress, the only thing in character with her age being a sour-looking doll, dressed in Elizabethan costume, which Arabella clutches in her hand.

We may be sure that no watchfulness was spared to bring her safely over the first perilous years of infancy, but that she reaped the full benefit of such physical knowledge as was granted to her day. The importance of diet and exercise

was at least understood, and the attention paid to them no doubt helped to enable the patients to survive the remarkable medicines which were largely administered at the first symptom of illness. Simple food was considered necessary for children, weak ale, however, holding a place that would be supplied in our days by milk among the more harmless fish, eggs, and beef that constituted the usual diet of the nursery.* As soon as the child could speak plainly and be made to understand, its education commenced, and by the age of five some progress was expected, even in a foreign language, the rod being unsparingly used to enforce application, while amusement was afforded by a few rough toys, such as a pampered child of the present day would scorn to touch. The juvenile books, which form so delightful a part of our present literature, were totally unknown, and, consequently, if a child really had a hunger for books, it was obliged to satisfy it with works written for adults, and hence the early familiarity with much that was gross and revolting which so largely contributed to the general license of speech and manners.

Arabella passed her first years in Derbyshire,

* The first governess of Queen Elizabeth complains of her wanting to eat the rich dishes of the older people.—See Ellis's "Letters."

under the care of her mother and grandmother of Shrewsbury, and was probably, at times, admitted into the presence of her unfortunate aunt, Mary, Queen of Scots, who, bereft of her only child, and seeking to divert her miserable captivity with needlework and the rearing of fowls, would be likely to receive gladly the far more cheering solace afforded by the prattle of an engaging little girl, and one so nearly related to her. It is quite certain that she manifested a kindly interest in the orphan daughter of her husband's house.*

In her will, dated 1577, Mary leaves her crown of Scotland and right of succession to Queen Elizabeth, to Charles Lennox or Claude Hamilton, whichever shall serve her most faithfully and be most constant in religion, should her son James persist in his heresy.† Before the will was completed, Mary heard of the death of Charles Lennox. Her prompt acknowledgment of the survivor's claims offers a marked contrast to the conduct of her son. In the same will, she orders that the Countess Margaret shall be reinstated in the earldom of Angus, and that Arabella shall take possession of her inheritance of the earldom of Lennox, and expressly orders

* State Papers, Mary, Queen of Scots, x. fol. 71, MS.

† Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots.

James, as her heir and successor, to fulfil her behest with regard to Arabella.*

But neither James nor the Regent was disposed to obey, and on the 10th of March, 1578,† the cause of Arabella was still further weakened by the death of her grandmother, Margaret, Countess of Lennox. This daughter of Queen Margaret, despoiled both of her inheritance and her dower, died so poor that she did not leave sufficient to defray the expenses of her funeral in a manner becoming her rank. Queen Elizabeth, therefore, for the credit of the royal house, undertook the charge of her funeral, and ordered her to be buried magnificently in Westminster Abbey, where the pompous inscription on her monument vainly seeks to hide the poverty, dependence, and misfortunes of her life.

To Arabella she left some jewels, to be given to her if she lived to be fourteen, and, in case of her death before that age, they were to become the property of her cousin James of Scotland. Thomas Fowler, the servant of Margaret, was appointed sole executor, and to him Mary, Queen of Scots, gave a warrant to transfer the jewels to the custody of Bess of Shrewsbury, till Arabella should have attained the above-

* Labanoff: Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots.

† See the inscription on the monument of Lady Lennox.

named age. The following is the list of the jewels:—

"My Lady Margaret's Grace committed her casket with jewels into the hands of Mr. Thomas Fowler, to be delivered to the Lady Arabella at the age of fourteen.*

1. A jewel set with a fair table diamond, a table ruby, and an emerald with a fair great pearl.

2. A cross all set with fair table diamonds, with a square linked chain.

3. A jewel set with a ballast, and a fair table diamond set beneath it.

4. A H of gold set with rock ruby.

5. A burrish set with a fair diamond.

6. A rose set with fair diamonds.

7. A carcanet set with table diamonds.

8. A girdle set with table diamonds.

9. A border set with table diamonds.

10. A border set with table rubies.

11. A border set with rock emeralds.

12. A table, the head of gold set with diamonds.

13. A fair pearl chain.

14. A chain set with rock rubies, pillar-wise.

15. A chain of small turquoise set upon a three square pillar.

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., ccxxxi., fol. 99, MS.

16. A cloek set in crystal, with a wolf of gold upon it.

17. Buttons of rock rubies to set a gown.

18. Table diamonds to set upon sleeves.

19. Two tablets of gold, the one with two agates, with divers small turquoises the other.

20. Enamelled the form of a globe.

21. Bracelets two pair; one of agate, and the other of plain gold, with other things that be not yet in memory."

James, however, showed a different disposition towards his cousin. While utterly regardless of and trampling on the claims of Arabella to the earldom of Lennox, he immediately began to besiege Queen Elizabeth to give up the lands conferred by Henry VIII. on his grandfather, Mathew, on his marriage with Margaret Douglas. That he had possession of all the Scotch lands conferred on his grandmother as a marriage settlement, and to which, in strict justice, Arabella also might be supposed to have some claim, he gave not a thought. In July, 1578, the Abbot of Dunfermline was despatched on an embassy to Queen Elizabeth,* his chief object being the prosecution of the claims of James to the "lands and living here in England sometimes appertaining to the Lord the Earl of

* State Papers, xxvii., Scotch Series, MS.

Lennox and my Lady Margaret his wife, his Majesty's grandfather and grandmother, now falling to his highness through their decease, by just title of order and lawful succession." The abbot then demanded, in the name of his master, to peruse the will of the late countess, and examine her accounts, in order to see the net remains when all her debts were paid, and all moneys owing to her received.

On the 28th of July, the abbot had an audience with the Queen and some of the Council, and found, to his disgust, that "difficulties were made" to grant his suit. The law that was always a bugbear and terror to James, viz., that no alien could inherit property in England, rose before him, and with this thought probably awoke his first feelings of jealousy and fear of his little cousin Arabella, who was equally related to the deceased countess, the granddaughter of Henry VII., from whom he claimed the succession to the English crown; and her inferior title, as the child of a younger branch, waxed mighty and terrible when it was asserted that the child of the *elder* was an alien, while she was born on English soil. "Queen Elizabeth," says the abbot, "seeming to remit his suit in that behalf to the laws of England, by which some meant to debar him from his right through occasion of his birth in

Scotland, I showed that as his highness undoubtedly looked for more friendly dealings at the hands of the Queen, to whom he is so dear, although his rights and interests were far more slender than it is, so doubted he not but *whatsoever default and lack of rigour of law may appear through the place of his birth,* her highness, *in consideration of the nearness of their blood, by her amity would supply it,* enabling him to succeed to the same land and livings, the pretence of his foreign birth notwithstanding," and thus "*might she well supply that which seemeth to lack by her special favour.*"*

The abbot could obtain nothing but, that, besides other reasons, the lands were now in ward, and the Queen could not show favour in this case without touching others whom it might offend, and that her majesty would only grant that, the lands being sequestered, the profits should be employed in paying a guard for the King's person during the period of sequestration.

Those on whose account the Queen professed to hesitate, and whom she "feared to offend," now presented their suit on behalf of Arabella,† alleging that, by the laws of England, Lord Charles was next heir to his mother, and his

* State Papers, Scotch Series, xxvii. MS.
† Ibid. xvii. fol. 51, MS.

daughter next heir to him, and that, consequently, such lands as were not entailed on heirs male were her right. But the cunning queen now in turn made use of James as a cause for refusing the suit of Arabella's friends, "which she hath done upon regard of the King of Scots," and, in order to be just, "her majesty hath requested the profit of that kind to go into the hands of the treasurer of England, master of the Ward, to be hereafter answered as he shall, by farther inquisition, find the same ought to come by the order of the laws of the realm, by which all land belonging to any subject ought to be ordered." And thus the question of the lands was disposed of for the present, and both the grandchildren of Margaret Lennox were deprived of property to which Elizabeth admitted there were two evidences in the letters patent of King Henry and Queen Mary, then extant as records in the Chancery of London.

The next question was the property left by the will of the countess, and which was answered in a manner equally unsatisfactory to the legatees. "As to her testament, though she made one, yet she died in so great debt, and her goods so far unable to answer the same, as the Queen's Majesty of natural favour, pity, and honour to her cousin, did bestow the charges of all her funeral,

to the intent her goods might serve to pay her debts." To Arabella's friends the Queen declared that the late countess's creditors had claims as well as Arabella, and to James she said truly enough that she found it "very strange that any disposition should be intended of the earldom to the prejudice of the young lady, the only daughter and heir of Charles, late *Duke* of Lennox, who had that estate assined to him and *heirs generally*." "For justice sake," urged the Queen, "let the King know this, that by ignorance he be not counselled to do any wrong to an Infant, Lady, and one of the next cousins in blood, being the sole heir to the said last Earl of Lennox."*

Thus Elizabeth, equivocating about the lands, and denying the existence of property under the will, fully acknowledged the title of Arabella to the earldom of Lennox. Burghley, the tried councillor, was of the same opinion, and it was on the occasion of his expressing it that he received the following letter from the mother of Arabella:—

Elizabeth, Countess of Lennox, to Lord Burghley.

"I CAN but yield your lordship most hearty thanks for your continual goodness towards me and my little one, and especially for your lord-

* State Papers, Scotch Series, xxvii. fol. 51, MS.

ship's late good dealing with the Scots Ambassador for my poor child's right, for which, as also sundry otherwise, we are for ever bound to your lordship, whom I beseech still to further that cause as to your lordship may seem best.

"I can assure your lordship that the earldom of Lennox was granted by Act of Parliament to my lord my late husband, and the heirs of his body, so that they should offer great wrong in seeking to take it from Arbella, which I trust, by your lordship's good means, will be prevented, being of your mere goodness for justice sake so well disposed thereto. For all which your lordship's goodness, as I am bound, I rest in heart more thankful than I can anywise express.

"I take my leave of your lordship, whom I pray God long to preserve.

"At Newgate Street, the 15th August, 1578. Your lordship's, as I am bounden,

"E. LENNOX."*

Every effort, however, was in vain. James was as rapacious about the earldom and lands of Lennox, in Scotland, as Elizabeth about the lands in England, for which, nevertheless, James kept up a ceaseless clamour till the Queen's death. Arabella was deprived of the earldom, which was

* Ellis's "Letters."

first given to Robert, Earl of Caithness, who soon after resigned it into the King's hands in favour of his favourite, Esme Stewart, Lord D'Aubigny, whom, in 1581, he created Duke of Lennox.*

And thus was the hapless orphan stripped of all that could accrue to her from the lands of Mathew, of Charles, and the will of Margaret, and thrown on the bounty of her maternal relatives.

Queen Elizabeth, however, a little moved at the forlorn condition of Arabella, consented to allow her mother £400 and Arabella £200 a year out of the sequestered lands of the Countess Margaret. The £400 to the young countess was dependent on the life of Arabella, and was to cease at her death, which led to a remonstrance on the part of the Earl of Shrewsbury, that it might, under all conditions, be continued during the sequestration of the property of Margaret. Earl George also presented the modest petition that, seeing how small a portion £600 a year was to maintain Arabella and her mother, with "that countenance appertaining to her degree and qualities," the countess might have, *in farm*, the possessions of the Lady Margaret towards their better maintenance, paying to the Queen

* State Papers, Reign of Eliz., Dom., xlv. MS.

the accustomed rent. As an inducement to this bargain, he pointed out how much better care the Countess Elizabeth would take of the house and timber of the estate than any stranger to whom it could be let, and promised a bond and securities for the fulfilment of her part of the agreement.

But the business schemes of the poor young countess were soon brought to a close. On the 21st of January, 1582, after a short sickness, she followed her husband to the grave, and Arabella, at the age of seven, was left bereft of both her parents. The following letters from Earl George give a pathetic account of the last hours of the gentlest and best beloved of all the daughters of Bess. The few glimpses we catch of her present her in an amiable light, and the affection she inspired in those around her adds to the interest chiefly awakened in her as the mother of Arabella Stuart :—

*The Earl of Shrewsbury to Lord Burghley.**

"My very good Lords,—It hath pleased God to call to his mercy, out of this transitory world, my daughter Lennox, this present Sunday, being the 21st of January, about three of the clock in the morning.

* Lansdowne MSS. xxxiv. fol. 1.

"Both towards God and the world she made a most godly and good end, and was in most perfect memory all the time of her sickness, even to this last hour. Sundry times did she make her most earnest and humble prayer to the Almighty for her Majesty's most happy estate, and the long and prosperous continuance thereof, and, as one most infinitely bound to her highness, humbly and lowly beseeched her Majesty to have pity upon her poor orphan, Arabella Stuart, and, as at all times heretofore, both the mother and poor daughter was most infinitely bound to her Highness, so her assured trust was that her Majesty would continue the same accustomed goodness and bounty to her child she left; and of this her suit and humble petition, my said daughter Lennox, by her last will and testament, requireth both your lordships (to whom she found and acknowledged herself always most bound), in her name, most lowly to make this humble petition to her Majesty, and to present with all humility unto her Majesty a poor remembrance (delivered by my daughter's own hands), which very shortly will be sent, with my daughter's humble prayer for her Highness's most happy estate, and most lowly beseeching her Highness in such sort to accept thereof, as it pleased the Almighty to receive the poor widow's mite.

"My wife taketh my daughter Lennox's death so grievously that she neither doth nor can think of anything but of lamenting and weeping.

"I thought it my part to signify to both your lordships in what sort God hath called her to his mercy, which I beseech you make known to her Majesty, and thus, with my very hearty commendations to both your good lordships, I cease.

"Sheffield Manor, this 21st of January (1581-82).

"Your lordship's assured,

"G. SHREWSBURY.

"To the Right Honourable my very good Lords, my Lord Burghley, and my very good Lord and Cousin the Earl of Leicester, of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council."

*The Earl of Shrewsbury to Sir Francis Walsingham.**

"GOOD MR. SECRETARY,—It hath pleased God to call to his mercy my daughter Lennox out of this frail world, who departed the same this Sunday, about three of the clock in the morning, with a good and godly mind, to God and the world. Thus much have I signified to my very good and honourable friends, the Lord Treasurer and my Lord of Leicester and Mr. Vice-Chamberlain, and thought likewise to signify the same to you, to whom my daughter in her life,

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., clii. fol. 9, MS.

and her infant, the Lady Arabella Stuart, hath been very much bound. I pray you so now, like a good friend, after her death, be you a mean to her Majesty to present my daughter Lennox's humble and lowly thanks to her Majesty, with her prayer for the long and happy estate of her Majesty. And for her Majesty's goodness at all times extended towards her and her poor orphan, who now is left altogether destitute, which might have greatly increased my daughter's grief if she had not had a most assured trust of her Majesty's most bountiful goodness and great compassion to all who stand in need of help and comfort.

"The poor mother, my wife, takes my daughter's death so grievously, and so mourneth and lamenteth that she cannot think of aught but tears, and therefore the rather I thought good to signify thus much unto you, and request your favour in this sort. And so, with my very hearty commendations to you, I cease.

"From my Manor House at Sheffield, this Sunday, being the 21st of January.

"Your assured loving friend,

"G. SHREWSBURY."

Elizabeth Lennox was buried in the family vault of the Earls of Shrewsbury at Sheffield.

The death of her mother left Arabella again

in a state of uncertainty regarding her income. The conduct of the Queen at the death of Charles Lennox had not been such as to inspire any great hopes in Arabella's favour, and new fears awoke concerning the continuance of the royal grant of six hundred a-year.

Bess was resolved that her grandchild should be brought up in a manner becoming her royal blood, and was anxious that the necessity for this should be acknowledged by the Queen, and the allowance continued in order to pay the increasing expense of her education. For this purpose she wrote the following letters.

*The Countess of Shrewsbury to Sir Francis Walsingham.**

"My Honorable Good Friend,—You understand by my lord's former letters how it hath pleased God to take from me my daughter Lennox, to whose Divine Majesty I must submit myself and all mine as it pleaseth him to dispose of us. Your wonted favour and honorable dealings shewed to me, hath made me now resort unto you as to my approved good friend. My assured trust is that her Majesty of her accustomed gracious goodness towards me will let

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., ii. fol. 13, MS.

the same portion it pleased her to bestow on my daughter Lennox and my jewel Arbella to go to the child for her better education and training up in all good virtue and learning, and so she may the sooner be ready to attend on her Majesty. The child now growing into more years shall stand in more need of more servants and teachers, I nothing doubt, but upon good mediation, her Majesty will think this portion little nought for the child. And thus, good Mr. Secretary, beseeching your accustomed friendly care to recommend this my suit and petition to her Majesty, and that you will give my son William Cavendish leave to attend on you from time to time to know your good pleasure, I cease.—Sheffield, the 28th of January. Your assured loving friend,

"E. SHREWSBURY."

*The Countess of Shrewsbury to Sir Francis Walsingham.**

"GOOD MR. SECRETARY,—With my right hearty commendations, I pray you take in good part my like desire that it will please you to prefer my humble suit unto the Queen's Majesty in the behalf of a poor infant, my jewel Arbella, who is to depend wholly upon her Majesty's bounty

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., cliii. fol. 39, MS.

and goodness, being in her tender age deprived of her parents, whose late mother in her extreme sickness, and even at the approaching of her end (which I cannot without great grief remember), did most earnestly sundry times recommend to her Majesty's gracious goodness and favour that poor infant her only care, with hearty desire and confidence that her Majesty might enjoy a long and prosperous reign, and be a gracious patron and sovereign to that her innocent child, as her Majesty hath hitherto been to them both, and for as much as the four hundred pounds yearly granted to my lady daughter is by her death at the Queen's Majesty's disposition, my humble suit is that her Highness, whose manifold gracious favours and bounty have so much bound me as no subject can be more to a most worthy sovereign, will vouchsafe to grant the same four hundred pounds to Arbella, for her maintenance during her minority, which is but for a few years, whereof I doubt not but her Majesty will favourably accept as hitherto she hath done of all my suits, and consider that her bringing up every way as appertaineth and so as she may be able the sooner in service to attend upon her Majesty (which I chiefly desire), will hardly be performed with six hundred pounds yearly in money, and more commodity is not to be made

of the lands, being as they are in lease. I do not like she should be now here as she was with her mother in her life-time, neither can I be contented she be in any place where I may not some time see her and daily hear of her well-doing, and therefore at great charges to keep her in house with such as are fit to attend upon her and be in her company, and being near well towards seven years old, she is of very great towardness to learn anything, and I very careful of her good education, as if she were my own and only child, and a great deal more for the consanguinity she is of to her Majesty, whose happy reign over us I daily with the most zealous mind pray the Almighty Governor of all things long to continue. And now craving most heartily your friendship in moving this suit to her Majesty, I refer the same to your wisdom, being better able to consider thereof than I am at this present, who cannot so soon enter into any thought of this cause but that I am overcharged with grief, and so make an end of this my inconsiderate letter, trusting her highness will accept of my loyal duty and service, which I desire you will commend unto her royal Majesty.—Sheffield, this 6th of May.

"Your loving friend,

"E. Shrewsbury."

Bess also besought Lord Burghley to intercede with the Queen to continue the whole grant of six hundred pounds, previously divided between mother and child, to be now continued to Arabella alone, on account of the increasing expenses of her education; and repeated that it was necessary that, though not always with her, still Arabella ought to be in some place where she could see her sometimes, and daily hear of her. Her care of Arabella, she repeated, was not only "such as a natural mother hath of her best beloved child, but much greater, on account of her relationship to the Queen."

The appeal was powerless. The £400 was withdrawn, and only £200 a-year, out of the sequestered property, was allowed to the rightful heiress.

Arabella was now seven years old, quick at learning, and retentive of what she acquired. Sir Walter Mildmay, writing of her in 1588, declares her to be very pretty, and thinks that she will resemble her grandmother Lennox.* The quick-witted child made so pleasant an impression on Sir Walter, who was then on a visit to the Earl of Shrewsbury, charged with business concerning the Queen of Scots, that he begged her to write a letter to Queen Elizabeth. The

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., MS.

"little lady," as Mildmay calls her, willingly complied, desiring him to give her letter to the Queen, and say that "her humble prayer is for her Majesty," a message that Mildmay sent with the letter to Walsingham, begging him to give it to the Queen.

The letter is no longer in existence, or has not been discovered, but if written undictated by the elders of the little scribe, there is little doubt that it was well worth the perusal of Elizabeth, and bore the stamp of originality, which was one of the distinguishing features of Arabella.

Already the child was the subject of matrimonial speculations. The first serious project was formed by the Earl of Leicester, who, with the full approbation of Bess, designed to marry Arabella to his only son, the little Lord Denbigh. The children were told of this plan, and even their portraits were sent to each other. The likeness of Arabella already described, with a doll in her hand, was probably the one sent to the little lord. The scheme, though managed with caution, got abroad, probably by means of Mauvissière, who received the news from Mary, Queen of Scots,* by whom he was instructed to convey it to Elizabeth.

* Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots.

On the 4th of March, Lord Paget writes to the Earl of Northumberland:—"A friend in office is verie desirous that the Queen should have light given her of the practice between Leycester and the Countess for Arbella, for it comes on very lustily, insomuch as the said earl hath sent down the picture of his babie."* Lord Denbigh was the son of Lettice Knollys, and, to judge by Leicester's letters, much beloved by his father, who soon felt the effects of his schemes for his son in the altered manner of the Queen and Court,† and a cloud gathered over him, which was only dispersed by the sudden illness and death of the little lord, "his only little son," as Leicester calls him. Lord Denbigh died in July, 1584, at Wanstead, at the age of three years. He lies buried in the Collegiate Church of Warwick, where the inscription on an altar monument near to that of his father declares that there "resteth the body of the noble imp, Robert Dudley, Baron of Denbigh, a child of great hope and towardness, taken from this transitory life unto the everlasting life, and in this place laid up among his ancestors, in assured hope of the general resurrection."

* Unpublished Talbot Papers.

† Mr. Davison to the Earl of Leicester.—State Papers, Scotch Series, 36, MS.

Allusion is also made to Lord Denbigh in the doggerel libel on his father, published during his life, entitled "Leicester's Ghost:"—

"First I assayed Queene *Elizabeth* to wed,
Whom divers princes courted, but in vaine;
When in the course unluckily I sped,
I sought the Scots' Queene's mariage to obtaine;
But when I reapt no profit for my paine,
I sought to match *Denbigh*, my tender childe,
To Dame *Arbella*, but I was beguiled.

"Even as Octavius with Marke Antony
And Lepidus the Roman empire shared,
That of the world these held the sovereignty,
So I a new triumvirate prepared,
If Death awhile yong *Denbigh's* life had spar'd,
The grandame, uncle, and the father-in-law,
Might thus have brought all England under awe."

The first plan of betrothal being thus completely broken, Leicester soon regained the favour of the Queen, and Arabella continued her education and passed her life in the usual manner of a girl belonging to one of the highest families in the realm, with this exception, that, on account of her royal blood, she was frequently brought forward and permitted to share the company of her elders, where another would have been kept in the retirement suitable to her age.

A glance at her home and occupations may not be unacceptable to the reader.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOME OF ARABELLA STUART.

THE reign of Queen Elizabeth was, among other things, marked also by a new style of architecture. The decreasing power of the nobles, and the closer drawing together of the higher and lower classes, were especially notable by the decay of the castles that for so many centuries had frowned over the land. New dwellings were built in which more attention was paid to beauty and comfort than to strength; and which, if less picturesque than the old castles, were also less suggestive of civil war and siege. Hardwick Hall, the greatest architectural triumph of Bess of Hardwick, affords one of the best examples of the latest habitations of the nobility in the reign of Elizabeth; and though it was probably in the *old* Hall, or at Chatsworth, that Arabella passed most of her earliest childhood, both of those as well as the castle of Sheffield being destroyed, it is from the present building that we shall obtain the nearest idea of her home.

Hardwick Hall is built of stone, and is of square shape, with turrets at the corners. Round the top runs a parapet of stone, in which the initials of Bess, "E. S.," are wrought in various places. Lofty state apartments, lighted with numerous transom windows, and hung with gorgeous tapestry, still remain, as if awaiting the promised visit of Queen Elizabeth. The room of audience is sixty-four feet nine inches by thirty-three feet, and twenty-six feet four inches high. The walls are covered with magnificent tapestry, representing the story of Ulysses, and over this are figures in plaster representing Diana and her attendant nymphs. In a wide recess at one end stands a large bedstead, elaborately carved and adorned with heavy velvet hangings, thickly embroidered with gold. At the upper end of the room is a canopy of state, formed of rich black velvet embroidered with various figures of lords and ladies dressed in the costume of the time of Elizabeth, and surrounded with lesser details, as animals, shrubs, &c.; and in the inside are worked the arms of the founder of the house. Gold-embroidered velvet and satin-covered chairs, with carven frames, a costly table of inlaid wood, a splendid looking-glass in a carven frame, and a magnificent marble chimney-piece, complete the furniture of this noble apartment.

Doors covered with tapestry softly open into a far more interesting scene. This is the picture-gallery, a hundred and seventy feet long, twenty-three feet wide, and twenty-six feet high. Ten immense diamond-paned windows light up the treasures within, and recall the saying, that

> "Hardwicke Hall
> Has more glass than wall."

Here may be seen portraits from life of Queen Elizabeth, Lady Jane Grey, Sir Thomas More, Cardinal Pole, Bishop Gardiner, Lord Burghley, James I. as a child, Mary, Queen of Scots, the three last husbands of Bess: Sir William Cavendish, Sir William Saintlow, and George Earl of Shrewsbury. There, too, in a black dress and ruff and thick veil, her false red hair covered with a small black cap, and her neck adorned with a chain of pearls—in size and number "worth a king's ransom"—may be seen the indomitable Bess, her character well indicated in the expression of her countenance.

Like the audience-chamber, the gallery is adorned with a canopy of velvet, marble chimney-pieces, and chairs, stools, &c., covered with the richest embroidery.

The rest of the house is in accordance with these rooms, and the amount of tapestry and embroidery bears witness to the skill and industry

of the embroiderers, who formed a part of every nobleman's household.

Let us suppose a day at old Hardwick Hall during the early youth of Arabella Stuart.

The bed-room of Arabella is lighted by a lofty window, looking out on the front garden of the Hall. The walls are covered with Gobelin tapestry, representing Cupids guiding a boat through the waters, and followed by attendants garlanded with ivy and oak, who accompany the little bark with the sounds of the trumpet and flute. On the marble chimney-piece rest two talbots supporting the shield of Shrewsbury, and round the room are ranged high-backed chairs covered with embroidery, with embroidered stools at their feet. At one end of the room is a Venetian looking-glass set in silver, and at the other a Flanders' chest, and a cupboard of cypress-wood. On a beaufet stands a silver candlestick, and on a table, covered with an embroidered cloth, lies a book—perhaps a volume of Plato.

The bed is decked with white drapery, worked in crimson and green, hanging over a heavy carven frame, and by the side is a footstool adorned with needlework. The luxurious feather cushions and pillows are covered with snow-white linen and white woollen blankets, and

over all is a counterpane of white and crimson silk.

There, summoned by her tiring-maiden, who is dressed

> "In petticoat of flannel red,
> And milk-white kerchief on her head
> Her smock-sleeves like to winter snow,
> That on the western mountains flow,
> And each sleeve with a silken band
> Fairly tied at the hand,"

Arabella rises, and, with the assistance of her tiring-maiden, performs her morning toilet.

At seven o'clock her breakfast is served her in her bedchamber, and consists of half a loaf of household bread, a manchet or loaf of the finest flour, a quart of ale, a chicken or some broiled mutton bones. Of this substantial array, Arabella takes her portion, and the remainder is given to her chief servant. If it be a fish day, the mutton and chicken are replaced by a piece of salt stock-fish, a dish of sprats, or three fresh white herrings, and a dish of butter.

The breakfast over, the clanging tones of a bell summon the household to prayers in the Hall chapel. A quarter of an hour is allowed to lock the great gates, and carry the forms and cushions to the chapel, when prayers are said by the chaplain, and the household then disperse to

their several duties for the day. The countess goes to superintend the maids, the earl to cast up accounts and give directions for the provision of his retainers, and see that his steward has obeyed all orders punctually; to survey his grounds and perform in person most of the work that is executed by a steward in these days. The young men exercise themselves in arms and athletic exercises in the tilt-yard, and Arabella, with her attendants, betakes herself to a separate apartment to pursue her studies. Languages form the chief—Latin being an especial object—but French, Italian, and Spanish are also taught her, grammatically and conversationally. She must get herself well up in the Greek Testament, and study Plato in the original, as much for the philosophy as the language, for in that time "great number of noble women in England were given to the studie of human sciences and of strange tongues. It was a common thyng to see young virgins, so *nouzled* and trained to the study of letters, that thei wyllyngly set all other vain pastymes at naught for learnyng's sake. It was no news at all to see queens and ladies of most high estate and progenie instede of courtly daliaunce to embrace virtuous exercises, readyng and writing, and with most earnest studie both erlye and late, to apply

themselves to the acquirynge of knowledge, as well as all other liberal arts and disciplines, as also most specially of God and his most holy writ." Arabella's tutor in these things is a converted Roman Catholic priest, who receives probably ten pounds a-year and his board for teaching a princess of the blood royal, a sum whose meanness he trusts to be compensated in the shape of an annuity when Arabella's education shall be finished. Then come lessons on the lute and virginals, and, not the least important, spinning and embroidery; and lastly, the pupil goes to the steward's region to learn "physick," surgery, confectionery, and "herbs"—the four last probably under the superintendence of her grandmother Bess.

The morning passes rapidly, for every one in the household is busily engaged, and by eleven o'clock the dinner is ready in the great hall. The hall is the largest apartment in the house, for there it is that all daily meet. Heavy suits of armour hang round the walls, burnished corselets and gaping helmets, coats of mail, shields, lances, pikes, maces, halberds and muskets. A large gallery at the end is filled with musicians, who begin to tune the viol, sackbut, harp, and cornet. At another end is placed a magnificent sideboard or beaufet of carven walnut-wood, laden

with gold and silver vessels, and crystal goblets, adorned with jewels, and moulded in fantastic forms of birds and beasts. At the upper end of the hall is the *oreille*, a recess containing two tables, three more being placed in the centre of the hall. The tables are covered with "faire whyte naperie," and in the middle of each stands a huge salt-cellar, to divide the table according to the rank of the guests. In the oreille, the plates are of silver; but at the other tables, trenchers serve for their purpose, a white linen serviette being laid by each trencher and dish. In the oreille, high stools with cushions richly embroidered are placed at the tables, and in the body of the hall long forms of wainscot-wood are ranged. When all is ready, the great gates are shut, the bell is rung, and in procession the mighty household majestically enters the hall. Two maîtres-d'hôtel lead the way, followed by the host and hostess and the guests. The Earl of Shrewsbury in a black velvet doublet, ornamented with ruff and some costly jewels, velvet slips, silk stockings, and large rosettes on his shoes of Spanish leather, his face aged with anxiety and fretfulness, his peaked beard silvered more with care than years, leads by the hand the haughty Bess, whose keen, well-preserved face manifests but little sympathy with the sorrows

of her consort. Her dark dress of cramasie is close at the neck, the peaked bodice fits close to her form, and the sleeves full gathered at the wrist. A fardingal distends the skirt, that, caught beneath the waist in a double fold, hangs over her high-heeled shoes; rich jewels adorn her dress, and a lace ruff, starched by a pupil of Mrs. Dinghem Van Plasse, encircles her neck. Then follows Arabella, who, though the youngest of the party, takes precedence of all on account of her royal blood. She wears a white dress, edged with black, ornamented with jewels placed at intervals down the front, the bodice cut in the square German fashion of the present day, covering her shoulders, but leaving her neck bare. The full sleeves are gathered in at the wrist, and turned back with a lace cuff. A pearl chain of great beauty and value is twisted many times round her neck, pearl bracelets clasp her wrists, a pearl drop hangs from her hair, and pearl pendants droop from her ears. Her hair of the prevailing auburn colour is raised high above her head, and falls in long crisped locks over her shoulders. Then come the Cavendishes, the children of Bess, and the Talbots, the descendants of Shrewsbury, and the noblest of the guests of the hospitable Hall. Perhaps Leicester, with his manly beauty, and false, treacherous, cowardly

heart, has just been whispering contemptuous words of his infatuated mistress to the scornful Bess, whom he much more admires, and to whom he feels far more akin than to the Queen, for Bess, like himself, is wholly selfish and worldly, while Elizabeth has deep, romantic feelings, and a heart that in its worst moments has many noble sentiments and powers of self-sacrifice, albeit they sleep awhile. Or Sir Walter Mildmay admires the intelligence of the young Arabella, whom he has just reminded, playfully, of her childish letter to the Queen, written at his request, and receives a witty answer to his keenest joke. Or Robert Cecil ponders silently on all he has heard and seen, and speculates to himself on the political position of the grand-daughter of his hostess.

All these proceed to the oreille and take their seats at the first table, and as soon as they are seated, the steward of the hall retires with the maîtres-d'hôtel, having first shown the guests to their seats.

Then come the Knights and Honourable Gentlemen, who take their seats at the second table in the oreille. They are followed by the Steward, the Comptroller, the Secretary, the Master of the horse, the Master of the fish-ponds, Arabella's tutor, and all guests beneath the rank of Knight

and Honourable—and these take their places at the first table in the hall.

Next come the Sewer, the Gentlemen Waiters, and Pages, who place themselves at the second table of the hall.

Lastly, the procession closes with the Clerk of the Kitchen, the Yeomen Officers of the house, the Grooms of the Chamber, and the rest of the servants, all placed above or below the salt, according to their rank, and every one in his appointed place; and "if any unworthy fellow do unmannerly sett himself down before his betters, he must be taken up and placed lower."

Silver ewers and basins with rose-water and perfumes are then handed round, and the guests having washed their hands and dried them on serviettes of perfumed damask, the usher enters, and his cry, "By your leave, my masters," is the signal for the first course.

The musicians strike up; and, amid the sound of sackbut, cornet, violin, and recorders, are borne to the first table in the oreille the viands which have been cooked by a "musicall-headed Frenchman" and his subalterns. Mighty joints of beef, mutton, and veal, boiled and roast, are accompanied by veal-pies, capons, blackcocks, chickens, plovers, partridges, with two different kinds of bread, the delicate marchpane and the coarser

cheate, and a few potatoes, for vegetables are almost unknown in England, and form no regular part of the bill of fare. The first in rank are served, and the dishes are then passed down in gradation to the lower tables, the last remains being reserved for the poor, who every day await this benevolence at the outer gate. The second course is ushered in in like manner, and is still more plentiful and luxurious—roast swans, venison, pheasants, pullets, snipes, teal, pigeons, and pastry. The third course is distinguished by the richness of the sweets; jellies in the shape of animals, trees, houses, &c., a "subtilty" or elaborate piece of sugar-work representing, perhaps, a fortress in miniature; "tarts of divers hues and sundry denominations," conserves of English and foreign fruits, gingerbread, marmalade, and comfits in endless variety. The beverages consist of ale and mead, and many kinds of wines of all countries served in silver tankards or fine Venetian glasses. The waiters at the earl's table are gentlemen of high birth, even the younger sons of noblemen, who are placed there to learn domestic customs, and all the intricate arrangements of a large household. Ushers, marshals, cupbearers, are all of rank, and without the perfect insight into domestic manners that they thus practically obtain, they

would be utterly at the mercy of their dependants, and unable to maintain in order the hundred retainers that may hereafter eat and drink and be clothed at their expense, when they themselves become the heads of families.

Profound silence is observed during dinner, "for it is the greatest part of civility," save when some one arises, and first uncovering his head, he takes a full cup in his hand, and setting his countenance with a grave aspect, he craves for audience. Silence being once obtained, he begins to breathe out the name, peradventure, of some honorable personage, whose health is drunk to, and he that pledges must likewise off with his cap, kiss his fingers, and bow himself in sign of a reverent acceptance. And thus the first scene is acted. The cup being newly replenished to the breadth of a hair, he that is the pledger must now begin his part, and thus it goes round throughout the whole company."

The banquet over, the guests again wash their hands in rose-water; and, leaving the gentlemen to their wine, as in the present day, the ladies retire to amuse themselves with backgammon, cards, ninepins, bowls, and, undoubtedly, the scandal of Queen Elizabeth's Court.

When the gentlemen have contented themselves with wine well spiced, perhaps the whole

company go on a hawking or hunting expedition, or engage in a trial of skill at archery, or, if the company be very numerous and of high rank, a bull or bear may be baited to death for their amusement, the fair ladies enjoying it quite as much as the Spanish beauties of the present day.

At seven o'clock, supper is served in the great hall, and resembles the dinner on a much smaller scale. After supper the company amuse themselves with dancing, chess, draughts, dice, *qui feray* (hot cockles), or *tiers* (blindman's buff), and other games, now numbered only among the sports of young children. At ten, the bell summons to the chapel. Prayers are said by the chaplain, and the household separates for the night.

A large portion of the day was thus devoted to amusements, which, however, will seem less if we remember that in those days fashionable persons had not the resources for wasting time that enables the present generation to kill so much of their heavy burden. In those days, ladies rose many hours earlier than now; they had no shopping to do, no morning calls to make, no morning concerts or lectures to attend, no Polytechnic, or Crystal Palace, or bazaar, or missionary meetings, or tract societies, or novels wherewith to occupy themselves. But still, then, as now, there were some who found excitement

more wearisome than work, and gladly stole some quiet hours to enjoy the calm companionship of the scanty literature that lay within their reach. Such was Lady Jane Grey, who, while her father and mother and the rest of the household were hunting in the park, found more delight in sitting alone in her chamber and reading the Phædo of Plato; and later on we shall find Arabella Stuart speaking with impatience of the "everlasting hunting" by which, perforce, she was dragged from studies in which she found far greater pleasure.

But the gorgeous home of Arabella had long been the scene of the utmost misery. During the first years of his last marriage, the Earl of Shrewsbury had been as deeply enamoured of Bess as any of his predecessors. But for some time this had all come to an end. That the fault was mutual, the letters existing between the two parties abundantly prove. Bess could not suit herself to any one. Her former husbands had been men of gay spirits, who led easy lives, and did not require much besides cheerfulness in a wife. But Shrewsbury, as the responsible gaoler of Mary, Queen of Scots, was loaded with heavy cares of every kind. He was a great loser in a pecuniary sense by his charge, while his constant anxieties were enough to render a

better-tempered man fretful and unreasonable. No doubt Bess had hard trials. But then they were just the things she disliked. She was the last woman in the world to share voluntarily a failure, a mortification, a petty harassing care. She was the very one to tell the sufferer hard truths in a hard manner—to point out, when too late, how difficulties might have been avoided, how success might have been obtained, and appropriating to herself the hard-bought experience of the victim, launch it forth as inborn wisdom of her own. No pity for the errors of a weaker nature, no tears for the fall of a noble soul, ever troubled her. Success in material things was the goal of her ambition, and any one who failed in that would have been deluded indeed in looking to her for sympathy. The failure of Shrewsbury, as regarded all emolument from the care of his royal prisoner, and the consequent embarrassment of his worldly affairs, were almost certain to impart a bitter tone to Bess. Spiteful words on the subject of the captive queen added to the gall created by money difficulties, and all mutual consideration soon became lost.

The love of Shrewsbury for his wife turned to deadly hatred and disgust. Bess threw off her mask, and, like most worldly women as they draw towards old age, she stood confessed in her

real deformity. The families of Cavendish and Talbot were also at variance, and, strange to say, Gilbert Talbot, the Earl's eldest son, sided with Bess, while her youngest son, Henry Cavendish, took part with the Earl. Henry was immediately ejected from Chatsworth, and Bess transported all the best part of the furniture to Hardwick, placing her two sons, William and Charles, in possession of the dismantled house; but as Henry Cavendish had married the Earl's daughter, Shrewsbury declared his intention of seizing Chatsworth.*

Accordingly, on the 28th of July, 1584, at two in the afternoon, the Earl, with forty horsemen, rode off from his castle at Sheffield, and arriving at the gates of Chatsworth, demanded admittance, declaring the house was his, and the goods that had been taken away were his property. William and Henry Cavendish both refused him entrance, adding, however, that, if he treated their lady mother well, they would yield it to him.† But Shrewsbury was now as infatuated with his hatred as he had formerly been with his love for Bess, and seemed bent on ruining her, regardless of

* Letter of the Earl of Shrewsbury.—State Papers, Eliz., Dom., ccvii. MS.

† Declaration of George Skargell.—State Papers, Eliz., Dom., ccvii. fol. 32, MS.

her rights; and he answered furiously "that he would come in, and that, if no other waie, he would famish them out." They replied that, at his marriage with Bess, he had conferred Chatsworth on them with his own hand and seal, and they positively refused to admit him. The Earl, conscious of some truth in their words, and also that the fascinations of Bess had procured her high friends at Court, turned back, and, instead of forcing an entrance, as he had threatened, he rode home and drew up a set of "remembrances to be laid before the Queen." In these remembrances he admitted that he "did make a deed of gift to Charles and William Cavendish of my liberalitie to the only use and behoof of my wife, and not to the use or benefit of Charles or William Cavendish." Two most extraordinary provisions, he says, are in the deed. The first is, that for ten shillings he and his wife may revoke the deed; the second is, that the two Cavendishes should do nothing without the license and consent of his wife, their disobedience to her rendering the deed null and void. But then, says poor Shrewsbury, "in my wife having all referred to her disposition, I thought that she would use it as became a wife. She hath since, contrary to my meaning, appointed all to the benefit of her two younger sons, and excludes me wholly from all,

and seeking to recompense my liberality with spite and disdain, she hath animated her son William Cavendish with weapons to deny me a night's lodging in Chatsworth, and to give me very hard language, greatly to my dishonour. So, as my wife having abused her duty towards me, and deceived the trust I committed to her, seeking to prefer the private profit of her sons by sinister practices to my dishonour, she deserveth no longer to have any part of my liberality.

"It were no reason that my wife and her servants should rule me, and make me the wife and her the husband."*

Bess, however, in her palmy days had made too sure a bargain for the Earl to retract now, and after numerous letters to the Queen and Walsingham, the Earl offered to compromise matters by a legal separation—he to receive the whole property, and out of it to allow the Countess Chatsworth House, £1500 a-year during her life, and a due possession of the lands to her children at his death.

But, strange to say, the person who disapproved of the separation was the Queen. In the case of Bess, she seems to have laid aside her prejudices against matrimony, and ordained, to Shrewsbury's disgust—

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., ccvii. fol. 33, MS.

"First, that the Earl shall take and receive the said Countess, his wife, unto him, and take probation of her obedience, and if he find her forgetful of her duty unto him in that time, then the Earl to be at his liberty to place her in her house at Chatsworth and leave her with her living assigned her by the Lord Chancellor and the Earl of Leicester, according to her Majesty's order set down by them."

The Earl, on his part, was enjoined to behave well and courteously, and defray all her necessary expenses, to her degree and calling.

Bess seems to have been desirous of living with her lord. She had no inclination to a limited income, and perhaps dreamed of recovering her lost sway over the immense domains of Shrewsbury. But nothing could revive the affection of the Earl. It had never been founded on respect, and he proved that he could be quite as spiteful and mean, and far more vindictive than Bess herself. He wrote to Walsingham, begging that Bess might be forbidden to come to Court, "as a woman not fit for that honourable office." He declared himself "ashamed to think of his choice of such a creature, with so *divelish* a disposition." He wanted her to refund all that he had given her, even to the smallest articles of household furniture, such as cups,

goblets, &c.; and when, in obedience to the Queen's command, which was certainly a very injudicious one, he was compelled to live with her, he left no chance of improvement on her side by the contemptible provocations he inflicted, even stooping so low as to curtail her allowance of fire, and to meddle in the housekeeping in a manner which in all ranks and ages has been justly considered as placing a man below the level of the lowest female domestic.* The household, however, was still conducted on the most formal and stately plan, and the house-books in existence† still show such admirable order and regularity, that the pecuniary difficulties of the Earl can in no way be charged to domestic mismangement. In the presence of the guests who frequented the Hall, the angry torrent was sufficiently curbed to render a visit almost as pleasant as ever. It was as a private home that Hardwick was so miserable; and child as she was, we may well imagine Arabella already dreaming of escape, especially as we have seen that her guardians had not thought her too young to be awakened to the prospects of matrimony—witness the exchange of pictures between her and

* Letter of Lady Shrewsbury.—State Papers, Eliz., Dom., ccvii. fol. 31, MS.

† Among the Harl. MSS.

her proposed husband—the "noble imp"—Lord Denbigh.

The failure of that plan by no means cooled the zeal of her friends, who now took higher aim. On the 25th of May, we find Walsingham writing to Mr. Wotton, and instructing him to "deal particularly with the King about his marriage, and to recommend the King of Denmark's daughter or the *Lady Arbella.*"* Wotton, however, returned answer that the King was just then not inclined to marry "one or other." Buck and hare hunting were the only pleasures that he cared for then, but *when* he wanted to choose a wife he would certainly be guided by Walsingham and Leicester.† This was probably an act of deference on the part of James to Queen Elizabeth, whom he supposed to be the real maker of the offer on the part of Arabella, for we find him at this very time as anxious as ever for the Queen to acknowledge his title—an anxiety for which she gave him ample cause. In 1586, she promises him a yearly pension, and solemnly swears "on the inviolable word of a queen," never to do anything to prejudice his "pretended title," and succession to her crown, "unless by his public misbehaviour and ingratitude wee be

* State Papers; Scotch Series, xxxvii. fol. 47, MS.

† Ibid. xxxix., MS.

justly moved to the contrary"—a clause that left the matter entirely to her decision after all, especially the words "pretended title," an expression that gave the greatest alarm to James, who immediately wrote begging her to expunge the offensive word. Elizabeth replied by promising never to suffer anything impairing *any* title he might have.* This, however, left the title unspecified, the question of succession remaining as open as ever; and so James drew up an instrument declaring himself to be. Elizabeth's successor, and sent it for her signature. The Queen refused this, alleging that she found in the document "many things comprised meeter to pass between strange persons that sought assurance of profit by force of proved writing than by force of mutual kindness and reciprocal love, out of which most properly all like varieties and fruits of love do spring."

And so the matter ended, leaving a canker in the heart of James, while the innocent cause of his jealousy was, in 1586, a third time put forward as a candidate for matrimony. The bridegroom proposed in this instance was Rainutio, son of the Duke of Parma,† and one of the claimants of the English crown. The matter,

* State Papers, Scotch Series, xl. fol. 4, MS.
† Ibid. xix. 108.

however, at this period, did not go beyond a discussion in secret, and for some reason was dropped for the time, but only to be revived in a more dangerous manner a few years later.

Arabella, who probably looked on a husband in the light of a new doll, bore her third disappointment with resignation. She continued to justify the opinion of Sir Walter Mildmay. The Queen took notice of her, and though she frequently changed her residence, living now in Derbyshire with Bess, or her Cavendish relations, and now with her aunt Mary Talbot, in London, in Newgate Street or Chelsea, yet she seems to have continued her studies in all places alike, and to progress as fast as if she had remained undisturbed at school. "It is wonderful," says Charles Cavendish, "how she profiteth in her book, and I believe she will dance with exceeding good grace, and can behave herself with great proportion to every one in their degree."*

Sometimes, she appears to have been left at the town house of the Earl of Shrewsbury, in the care of ladies appointed by her aunt, when the latter was unable to remain in town with her niece. The motive for leaving Arabella in town was probably to keep her near the Queen, who,

* Letter of Charles Cavendish in Miss Costello's "Memoirs of Eminent Englishwomen."

it was hoped, would take an interest in her. The following letter alludes to one of these visits to the metropolis :—

*Sir Henry Goodere to Mary Lucy Talbot.**

"Madam,—I do understand by my mother Rumbold, that your ladyship hath had some speech with her, touching your charge at Newgate Street, and that it is your ladyship's pleasure I should write unto you in what sort I might (without any hindrance) be able to provide for the diet of my Lady Arbella and the rest there by your ladyship's appointment. And as I am already assured of your ladyship's most honorable mind, that I should no way charge myself, so am I most desirous to have your ladyship hold that opinion of me, that I mean not to make a gain by your ladyship in any such sort. And therefore I have called myself a straight reckoning, and find by my attempt that my housekeeping doth stand me in five marks every week now more then I spent before the ladies came to Newgate Street, which I will leave to your own honorable consideration. And howsoever it shall please your ladyship, I will be most ready

* Daughter of Sir William Cavendish and wife of Gilbert, Lord Talbot, afterwards Earl of Shrewsbury.—Sloane, MS. 4161, fol. 1.

to do you all the humble service I can. And so with my humble duty to your ladyship, I commit your honour to the Almighty.

"Newgate Street, this 10th of October, 1587.

"Your Ladyship's most humbly at commandment,

"H. GOODERE."

"My Lady Arbella (thanks be to God) is well and in health with all the rest of the ladies, and have been so ever since your ladyship saw them.

"To the Right Honorable, my very good Lady the Lady Talbot, at the Court."

The death of her aunt, Mary, Queen of Scots, was the immediate cause of Arabella's presentation to Court. Cold-hearted as James had shown himself to his mother in her troubles, he professed, at least, the utmost indignation at her death, and vowed vengeance against the Queen of England. Then, for the first time, the political significance of the existence of his little cousin was brought into bearing, and made a weapon against the just anger of James. The partisans of Queen Elizabeth in Scotland admonished the King to recollect that he was now next heir to the English crown, and advised him not to risk the forfeiture of succession by offend-

ing the Queen of England. The English army was reinforced on the marches, English gold was plentifully distributed among the Scotch nobility; but the most powerful argument to silence James consisted in inviting Arabella Stuart to Court, and speaking of her in ambiguous terms as the successor to the crown. The little girl of twelve years was brought forward in public, took precedence of all the nobles, and was almost treated as Princess Royal. One especial mark of grace was conferred upon her—that of dining with the great Queen.

Hentzner, an eye-witness, gives us a curious account of the ceremony with which the royal dinner was prepared:—

First, entered an usher with his rod, and with him a gentleman carrying a table-cloth. Both kneeled thrice, and then, spreading the table-cloth, kneeled again and retired. They were followed by a second usher and a gentleman with a salt-cellar, a plate, and bread, which were placed upon the table with the same ceremony. When the bearers had retired, there came an unmarried lady, dressed in white silk, and bearing a tasting-knife, who, after thrice kneeling, rubbed the plates with bread and salt. Next followed the yeomen of the guard, bare-headed, and clothed in scarlet, with a golden rose on

their backs, and bearing twenty-four dishes served in gilt plate. Three dishes were then delivered, one by one, to a gentleman, who placed them on the table, when the lady in white silk gave each of the guards a mouthful out of the dish that he had brought—a by no means unnecessary precaution against poison. During the bringing in of these dishes, twelve trumpets and two kettle-drums in the hall announced the important hour. When all was ready, a number of unmarried ladies appeared, who, "with much solemnity," lifted the dishes from the table and carried them into the Queen's inner apartment, where she always dined alone, save a few attendants, and after her Majesty had been served, the dishes were carried out and dispensed to the ladies of the Court.

The greatest mark of intimacy that Queen Elizabeth could give was considered to be that of permitting any one to dine with her in this inner apartment. Even a foreign prince was not allowed this extraordinary honour without much interest and effort. Yet into this holy place was the young Arabella admitted; she dined off the sacred viands, and, after dinner, was introduced by the Queen to the nobles and ambassadors who were assembled in the next apartment. On one of these occasions, Madame d'Aubespine de

Châteauneuf, the wife of the French ambassador, was present.

She relates that after dinner, while the Queen was standing surrounded by a crowd of gentlemen, her Majesty asked the ambassadress if she had seen a little girl, her relation, who was there, and as she spoke she called Arabella to her. Madame de Chateauneuf immediately noticed and praised the child, doubtless in all sincerity, for we hear but one opinion of Arabella. She remarked how well she spoke French, and said that she appeared very sweet and gracious. "Look well at her," said the Queen, "for she is not so unimportant as you may think. One day she will be even as I am, and will be Lady Mistress; but I shall have been before her."

It is scarcely probable that Queen Elizabeth had any real intention of appointing Arabella as her successor; but she found it very useful to keep a check on James by such speeches as these, and it was probably in this light that the French ambassador regarded them. He was much pleased with Arabella, and describes her at this time as having "much understanding, speaking Latin, French, and Italian well, sufficiently handsome in the face, and," he adds, ominously,

"*without doubt* (she) *would be the lawful inheritress of the crown, if James of Scotland were excluded as a foreigner.*"

Lord Burghley was on terms of the greatest intimacy with the Shrewsbury family. He interested himself vainly for Arabella when she was left a poor infant, and he continued to treat her as a favourite and pet. On the day that she was presented at Court and dined with the Queen, he made her take supper with him, and it was in his house that, probably for the first time, she met Sir Walter Raleigh. Burghley "made exceeding much of her" at supper, recounted her accomplishments enthusiastically to Raleigh, and after supper, took her into the great hall, where he presented her to his guests in the same fond manner,* and when the flattered child bade him good night, he eagerly asked when she would come again to Court.

Before leaving town, Mr. Gilbert Talbot and his wife, probably taking Arabella with them, went to take leave of the good old treasurer. He was at the time unable to see them, and so they wrote from their "pore lodging in Coleman Strete," to bid him farewell. At the end of this letter, dated July 13, 1588, is a postscript

* Letter of Charles Cavendish in Miss Costello's "Eminent Englishwomen," vol. i. p. 210.

by Arabella, interesting as the earliest piece of her writing still in existence. It was written at the age of thirteen, and is in French—probably to exhibit her proficiency in that language:—

"Je priezez Dieu Mons. vous donner en parfaicte et entière santé, tout heureux, et bon succès et serez preste à vous faire tout honneur et service.*

"ARBELLA STEWART."

In 1589 the question of her lands seems to have been mooted. They were probably lands left her by her mother; and two or three times we find reference to the manor of Smallwood, in Derbyshire, about which was a long lawsuit on behalf of "the Lady Arabella."†

On Feb. 5th, 1589, Sir Francis Walsingham writes to Thomas Fowler, "This morning, my Lord Treasurer sent unto me to give you advertisement that for the defense of some of the lands belonging to the Lady Arbella, now in question, he should have need of the evidences of the said lands, and therefore to request you to send him word where the said evidences remain and how he may come to them, whereon I

* Ellis' Letters, Second Series.

† See Chancery Bills, Eliz.

pray you with all expedition to give his lordship such satisfaction as you can."*

The efforts were probably unsuccessful, for Arabella remained as poor as before. Another difficulty arose: the jewels left by Margaret, Countess of Lennox, for Arabella, were, as we have seen, given by warrant of Mary, Queen of Scots, into the hands of Thomas Fowler, who was to keep them in his charge till Arabella was fourteen years old, when they were to be delivered to her. Unfortunately, at this critical period, Thomas Fowler died, and the jewels came into the hands of King James. Arabella had now reached the age of fourteen, and Lord Burghley wrote on her account, demanding the jewels. This demand was also made in vain. On the 4th of June, 1590, Robert Bowes writes to Lord Burghley: "Sundrie times I have moved the King, that the jewels late in the hands of Thomas Fowler, deceased, and appertaining to the Lady Arbell, might be restored to her. Nevertheless, I am still deferred, that upon sight of the Lady Margaret's will the King will take order in all these things."

On the 12th of June, 1590, Bowes again writes to Burghley: "I have again, and with some earnestness, sought that the jewels late in

* State Papers, Scot., xlv. fol. 55, MS.

hand of Mr. Fowler, deceased, and appertaining to the Lady Arbella, and the bills, bonds, writings, apparel, and other goods of Mr. Fowler, taken by Earl Bothwell, might be restored. But the King hath answered, yesterday, that he doth not only detain them in recompense of such legacies as the Lady Margaret Douglas bequeathed to him, and left in Mr. Fowler's custody to be delivered to him, and whereof he is not hitherto satisfied by any part; but also that these jewels and pearls being the goods of Thomas Fowler, appertain to the King, for that he died intestate and was a stranger here. He agreed to submit the matter to the Council."*

The son of Fowler besought restitution, promising to pay his father's debts, and especially to restore such jewels as belonged to Arabella and others. But the King ordered all debts due to Mr. Fowler to be paid to *himself*. The debtors, in fear of the royal summons, were inclined to obey the unjust demand, and pay the money to the King, "out of whose hands," says Bowes, "it will be hard to recover the same." Bowes was well aware of the King's intention to claim them on the ground of Fowler dying intestate, and resolved to do all in his power to preserve the money.

* State Papers, Scot., xlv. fol. 62, MS.

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Whether the jewels were recovered is uncertain; the probabilities are that they were, at any rate, partly restored, as, later on, we find Arabella in possession of jewels; and her dress is estimated at an amount totally at variance with her income, and which can only be comprehended by reckoning jewels as the chief article of expense.

At this time, a change took place in the home of Arabella, and a new lord ruled over the domains of the house of Shrewsbury, unhappily without bringing any improvement in domestic peace.

On the 18th of November, 1590, died George, sixth Earl of Shrewsbury, the fourth and last husband of Bess of Hardwick, an event which led to estrangement between his widow and those of his sons, who had heretofore been on peaceable terms with each other. And still the all-fruitful source of discord between relations—money—continued the strife that had embittered the life of the last Earl. He had left his two younger sons, Edward and Henry Talbot, executors, in preference to Gilbert, his heir, who had offended him by taking part with Bess against him. The two sons renounced the executorship, and Bess, stepping in, claimed and obtained the administration. But to this, Gilbert Talbot,

now Earl of Shrewsbury, refused to submit, and succeeded in obtaining the administration *de novo*, and in putting Bess completely out of office. Violent dissensions between the Earl and widow were the consequence, the former being at the same time at war with his brothers, one of whom (Edward Talbot) was accused of trying to poison him by means of a pair of perfumed gloves.

Arabella was thus continually in the midst of discord and strife. From the time of her grandmother's estrangement from her fourth husband, there had been little peace at home, and the suspicions with which Queen Elizabeth now began to regard Arabella, did not serve to render the change to London much more attractive.

Those who have not known a happy home in early youth, if gifted with strong capabilities of affection, are prone to place a high value on domestic happiness. To them it seems a far-off haven of peace, a goal brighter than any that ambition can offer—nay, even ambition to them is but the path which they trust may lead to the serene reward. They wish to be known in order to be loved; and while the world sees only a battler for distinction, and good persons possibly hold forth on the vanity and worldliness of their aims, the true interpretation of their ambition would be to be truly known.

That this was the predominant feeling in the heart of Arabella, there can be little doubt. Her keen intellect was, as is generally the case, accompanied by ardent and sympathetic feelings. To be a princess of the blood royal was no source of congratulation to her. Her rank shut her out from all companionship with girls of her own age, and there were no high natures in the mature minds of those around her on whom she could repose with reverence and confidence. The worldly Bess could give her education and care for all her physical wants, but that was all. And so Arabella fell back on the only resource of a lonely, gifted mind—the companionship of books. But, in her day, that was a far poorer compensation for the lack of friendship and sympathy than even at present. Science was in its earliest infancy. The fine arts were practised only in foreign countries, and literature was chiefly confined to the classics. The romance reader was compelled to be satisfied with the woes of Dido and the lovers of Penelope. Such literature as lay within her reach was, however, eagerly devoured by Arabella, and it is probable that now began those dreams of a romantic home, a companion who could comprehend her, and a lot where Love should reign triumphant.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST SUSPICIONS.

ARABELLA was now nearly fifteen years old, and with every year her importance increased. Though not what is called beautiful, her face was lighted up with that animation and intelligence which is more charming than beauty, while her auburn hair flowing over her shoulders, her blue eyes, and rounded figure, gave the clearest denial to those who would refuse her all credit for the possession of even physical charms.* She was one of those who make such totally different impressions on different persons—characters not unknown in our own day, whose beauty is chiefly "in the eye of the gazer,"—and hence we have the most opposite accounts of her appearance; and while some have pronounced her as having no claim to good looks, others, probably those who conversed with and listened to her, have unhesitatingly,

* Numerous portraits exist of her. No less than eight miniatures of her were exhibited at the South Kensington Museum alone.

and without qualification, applied to her the term "beautiful." Her portraits well confirm the impression of a disputed claim to beauty, but all alike express intelligence and goodness.

But none of these advantages, so powerful in plebeian life, had any effect on her destiny. None cared to win her for her merits or her graces—all sought to gain her as a political tool, and a firebrand to kindle the flames of war.

The dispersion of the Spanish Armada had not given peace to Queen Elizabeth. When the first excitement of the triumph was over, new cares pressed upon her, new invasions threatened her, and domestic conspiracy began to lift its hydra head and poison her life with suspicions too well founded to make us wonder at acts that, looked at without the accompanying circumstances, appear at first sight unmitigated tyranny. And tyranny they certainly were, as a glance at the statute-book of this reign will amply testify. But that every provocation was given can be no more denied than the acts themselves. It is a common saying, that "Elizabeth was great as a queen, little as a woman." It would be much better to say that some of her acts were right and others wrong, some her glory and others her shame, and thus judge her solely as a human being. It is forgotten that Eliza-

beth had the sternest masculine duties imposed upon her, that her advisers were men of severe natures, that the amount of hard unromantic work she daily performed would frighten many a nervous man of the present day, who might well shrink from the mere idea of only mastering the contents of her vast and incessant correspondence; that amidst all these sterner duties, and the constant cares and anxieties that pressed upon her, she neglected none of the minor ceremonies and observances that, insignificant in themselves, are yet representatives of certain feelings, and form an important link between a sovereign and her people. Heavily would these stupendous labours have fallen on the strongest man, yet they would in all probability have been lightened by the sympathy, sometimes a better thing than the aid of a consort, one who, like Philippa at the siege of Calais, might have pleaded that mercy was at times better than justice, and dispelled the terrors that are the most fruitful sources of crimes. But Elizabeth had no such adviser and consoler. That her solitary condition was her own choice, is a reply worthy of those who regard marriage only in the light of a good business transaction, or an engagement which every woman is bound to form under peril of being considered deficient in the softest feelings

of humanity. That, in spite of the cruelties from the stigma of which she cannot be freed, she was intensely susceptible of feelings which she deemed it her duty to crush cannot be denied. Her faithful friendship for Burghley, her bitter tears at his death, her love for little children, her melancholy observation on hearing that the Queen of Scots was the mother of a "faire sonne," the honour she paid to men of genius, who, knowing her faults, have yet left their recorded words in her favour—all go to prove that she really sacrificed herself in this matter to the good of her kingdom, and to the highest feelings of which she was capable, viz., not to entrust all that was precious to her to one who was incapable of fulfilling that trust with honour and devotion. As to her suitors, which of them could be consort for such a mind? the false Dudley, the cruel Philip, the dissolute Anjou, the fickle Charles, and the host of inferior men, who, as Elizabeth well knew, paid court to her throne, and not to herself, and who proved their unworthiness and her just judgment of them by becoming her enemies afterwards? But the unmitigated tasks fell too hardly, and the cruel suspicions from which she could not escape poisoned her better nature, and with the hard sacrifice of her own feelings, went hand-in-hand the sacrifice of the

feelings of others. The innocent misrepresented to her by the guilty, were treated as guilty; and those who truly known would have been appreciated, and might have been a solace to her, were by her enemies presented in such odious forms, that her sight was perplexed, and she looked upon them as traitors and enemies too. As early as the year 1586,* we have seen that a plan had been formed for marrying Arabella Stuart to the Prince of Parma, son of Alexander Farnese, the famous duke, the object of the "foul scorn" of Elizabeth. Nothing then came from this, and the probability is that Elizabeth was ignorant of the design, as she treated Arabella and her relations with such favour. But in the year 1590† the plan was renewed, not by the relations of Arabella, who had nothing to do with it, but by the discontented English Catholics, supported by the Pope. The eldest son of Alexander Farnese was the first proposed, but as he was encumbered with a wife, his younger brother, the Cardinal Farnese, was to be released from his vows by the Pope, and as he was the direct descendant of the line of Philippa, the eldest legitimate daughter of John of Gaunt,

* State Papers, Scotch Ser., xix. fol. 108, MS.

† State Papers, Scotch Ser., xlvi. fol. 15, MS. Carte, iv. p. 707.

and wife to John I. of Portugal, he was supposed to have a claim to the English crown. Cardinal Farnese was to marry Arabella, become king of England, and the reign of the Catholics was once more to be established. The party who supported this plan consisted of Roman Catholics, too patriotic to choose the foreign Infanta of Spain, and too much attached to their religion to wish for a Protestant on the throne. Arabella, though acknowledged a Protestant, was but a girl supposed to be easily influenced, and was even suspected of wavering already. It was for the sake of bringing in foreign aid to strengthen *her* pretensions that the Catholics wished to marry her to Farnese, and by his means give force to the objection of alienation against James of Scotland.

Pope Gregory, and later on, Pope Clement VIII., perfectly understood this feeling. Clement, especially, saw that too many of the Roman Catholics of England, as well as the King of France, were against the Infanta to give any hope for her, and he, therefore, for many years, sanctioned the present wild and outrageous scheme. Among other things, it was rumoured that a man named Revel, called also Lord Latimer, painted, with the assistance of Hilliard, a portrait of Arabella, to send to the Duke of Parma.*

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., 1591, MS.

New reports and suspicions were soon added and put into circulation, and among them one that she was to marry the Earl of Northumberland, how well-founded and how worthy of credence may be judged from the following extract from "Certain Notes of remembrance out of the examination of H. Walpole and others:"—

"It should seem there is some eye abroad and some project of contriving a match between the Earl of Northumberland and the Lady Arbella; not that there appeareth any practise thereof on this side, but if they abroad conceive it to be apt for the purpose at one time or the other, they will set the traffic a-foot."*

To this may be appended a miserable concoction, only valuable as showing the sources of the unjust and ridiculous rumours that deprived Arabella of the favour of the Queen:†—

"What speeches the Earl of Shrewsbury, my lord and master, used to me at my being with him the 24th of September, being Thursday, 1590, at his house at Hanworth, in his chamber (account of talk that he had about my lady his life), with almost tears in his eyes, that he feared the Lady Arabella would bring much trouble on his house by his wife and his daughter's devises.

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., ccxxxv. fol. 19, MS.
† Ibib. ccxxxiii., 73, MS.

And there withal clapt his hands sundry times upon his breast, saying, 'Here it lies, here it lies. Do you not know one Dr. Browne,' said he, 'about London, a cunning fellow, he is a great man with my daughter Talbot and the Cavendishes?' I answered, 'I know him not.' 'Well,' said he, 'that same Browne is a masker in this house. And my wife and her daughter have great affairs with him. And at dealing with some of the heralds about matters which must be kept from me (for they think I am a great block in their way), I know Gilbert Talbot will be too much ruled by those ——, for they do with him what they will list, and so I have said to some of his friends, but all will not help. If God give me any ability and health, I will to the Queene this next spring, though I go but two miles a-day. And I know that the Queene favours not Gilbert Talbot. Both for those matters he took part with my wife in against me. And for the Lady Arabell. She was wont to have the upper hand of my wife and her daughter Talbot, but now it is otherwise (as it is told me) for that they have been advised by some of their friends at the Court that it was misliked. My daughter Talbot persuaded her husband how he is bound by all laws, both divine and others, that he ought not to keep any secrets from her being his

wife, whatsoever it be that he knoweth or thinketh.'"

It was at this time that Arabella received the following, her first letter from James of Scotland:—

*The King of Scotland to Lady Arabella Stuart.**

"Although the natural bonds of blood, my dear cousin, be sufficient for the good entertainments of amity, yet will I not abstain from those common offices of letters, having now so long keeped silence till the fame and report of so good parts in you have interpelled me. And as I cannot but in heart rejoice, so can I not forbeare to signify to you hereby, what contentment I have received hearing of your so virtuous behaviour, wherein I pray you most heartily to continue, not that I doubt thereof, being certified of so full concourse of nature and nourriture, but that you may be the more encouraged to proceed in your virtuous demeanour, reaping the fruit of so honest estimation, the increase of your honour and joy, and your kindly affected friends, specially of me, whom it pleaseth most to see so virtuous and honorable scions arise of that race whereof we have both our descent. Now hearing more certain notice of the place of your abode, I will

* State Papers, Scot., xlvii., fol. 123.

the more frequently visit you by my letters, which I would be glad to do in person, expecting also to know from time to time of your estate by your own hand, which I look you will not weary to do, being first summoned by me, knowing how far I shall be pleased thereby. In the meanwhile, and next occasion of further knowledge of your state, after my heartiest commendation, I wish you, my dear cousin, of God all honour and hearty contentment.

"From Holyrood House, the 23rd of December, 1591.

"Your loving and affectionate cousin,

"JAMES R."

The chief suspected Papist in the family was Mary Talbot, the wife of Gilbert, who was repeatedly warned on account of his wife. He did not deny that she was a Papist, but declared *his* soul "as clear as crystal," and invited a strict investigation of his family with regard to their supposed plots. We may be pretty sure that, if there had been the shadow of a proof against Arabella or Gilbert's wife, they would have speedily felt the effects. No trial or punishment was inflicted, but from this time Queen Elizabeth looked upon Arabella with a suspicious eye. We hear no more of her presence at the royal dinner-

parties, or of public honours paid to her before foreign ambassadors. The poor child had become the centre of a party, and was looked upon almost as guilty as if the plots were made on her behalf rather than on those of the plotters. They were, however, sufficiently in earnest to wish to get hold of her, and it is by no means unlikely that, once in possession of her, they would have forced her to marry Farnese, and commenced active operations in good earnest. The following curious conversation between two Catholic agents is extracted from the confession of a Jesuit named James Yong, and though perhaps extorted by the rack, and therefore unreliable, it is valuable as showing in what light Arabella was represented to Queen Elizabeth, and what cause the latter had for her suspicions:—

"When Roulston departed back again, he came to Stanley, who said, 'Thou art welcome, I hope. Thou shalt be employed in as good service for the Lady of which we have often talked.' At which time he said no more. Yet, being demanded after by one Dr. Stillington what the Lady was, 'Oh!' saith he, 'if we had her, the most of our fears were past, for any one that could hinder us in England. It is *Arbella*,' saith he, 'who keepeth with the Earl of Shrewsbury, whom most certainly they will proclaim

Queen, if their mistress should now happen to die. And the rather they will do it, for that in a woman's government they may still rule after their own designments. But here is Symple,' saith he, 'and Rowlston, who, like cunning fellows, have promised to convey her by stealth out of England into Flanders, which, if it be done, I promise unto you she shall shortly after visit Spain.' "*

This confession was made before the Lord-Keeper Puckering, Lord Buckhurst, and Mr. Fortescue, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who immediately sent it to Burghley, by whom it was imparted to the Queen. "Her Majesty," says Burghley, "would not any here of her Council know that part of his confession, but only myself and Robert Cecil, because, seeing the length, to ease me, she caused him to read it."

The secrecy was wise, and very soon the words of the priest were confirmed by another, named Thomas Christopher, who deposed that "Sir William Stanley, at his last coming from Rome, being entertained with great courtesy by My Lord the Bishop of Montefiascou at supper, discoursed largely of the state of England. Among other things, saying: 'that one young Lady, as yet unmarried, was the greatest fear they had, lest she

* Strype's "Annals," iv. p. 102.

should be proclaimed Queen, if it should so happen that her Majesty should die.' Yet there was hope that some will be found to hinder this matter. So he would not name the Lady, his man being there in presence. Yet, at my coming to Paris, and talking with one Mr. Robert Tempest, I repeated again these words, demanding if he did know anything concerning this young Lady. He answered that very shortly he trusted to God to meet with her here at Brussels. For that one Simple, a Scot, and one Rowlston, had undertaken to convey her out of England. The Lady doth abide with an Earl whose name I do not remember. And she is allied to the Queen of Scots." *

Sir William Stanley was said, by another priest, to have a pension for life of three hundred crowns a-month from the King of Spain. He appears to have been the chief agent employed to obtain possession of Arabella. His myrmidons were sent to England to collect mariners for the King of Spain, and disguised as beggars, they wandered about, seeking to corrupt by foreign gold, and promises of advancement, all whose loyalty to England was weaker than their allegiance to the Pope. Their efforts, however, failed. Arabella was too strictly guarded, and so long as she re-

* Strype's "Annals," iv. p. 106.

mained in England, there was but little hope of her forming a rallying-point.

Perhaps a latent remorse at having deprived Arabella of her title of Countess of Lennox, and her father's estates, made James now try in some measure to make compensation for his injustice. The earldom of Lennox had been conferred by him on his favourite, D'Aubigny (Esme Stüart), and James again proposed that he should marry Arabella, and thus restore her lost rights at the same time that he added to the dignity of his favourite. D'Aubigny eagerly accepted the proposed honour. "It is told me," says Robert Bowes, writing to Lord Burghley, "that the Duke of Lennox knoweth an especial personage in England to follow his cause there, and that still, by advice of a great personage here, he longeth after Arbella." * James, having no children, declared his intention of naming Esme Stuart as his successor to the Crown of Scotland, and thus his marriage with Arabella would have had the same effect of uniting the two crowns, in case of James's death without issue, as if he had lived.

Arabella was probably no more consulted on the matter than in the other matrimonial plans on her account, nor do we find that her maternal relations fell at all into the plan, which was at once

* State Papers, Scotch Series, xlix., fol. 23, MS.

put an end to by the stern refusal of Queen Elizabeth, who signified her disapprobation in such bitter terms and scornful language that James adduced it as one reason for forming a confederacy with the King of Spain against her. And thus ended the fourth proposal for the hand of Arabella.

The Catholics were still on the alert, and constantly watching for a safe opportunity either of drawing her into their plots or of getting her into their power. The counter-spies employed by Burghley and the Queen, however, rendered all their efforts vain. A strict watch, night and day, was kept over Arabella, and a letter from Lord Burghley warned Bess (of Hardwick) of the dangers that were lurking near, and cautioned her to use all her vigilance in the guardianship of her precious charge.

Bess returned the following answer, which is interesting, especially as showing the manner in which Arabella's daily life was passed:—

*The Dowager Countess of Shrewsbury to Lord Burghley.**

"My honorable good Lord,—I received your Lordship's letter on Wednesday towards night, being the 20th of this September, by a servant

* Ellis's "Letters."

of Mr. John Talbot's of Ireland. My good Lord, I was at the first much troubled to think that so wicked and mischievous practises should be devised to entrap my poor Arbell and me, but I put my trust in the Almighty, and will use such diligent care as I doubt not but to prevent whatsoever shall be attempted by any wicked persons against the poor child. I am most bound to her Majesty that it pleased her to appoint your Lordship to give me knowledge of this wicked practice, and I humbly thank your Lordship for advertising it; if any such like be hereafter discovered, I beseech your Lordship I may be forewarned. I will not have any unknown or suspected person to come to my house. Upon the least suspicion that may happen here, any way, I shall give advertisement to your Lordship. I have little resort to me; my house is furnished with sufficient company. Arbell walks not late; at such time as she shall take the air, it shall be near the house and well attended on; she goeth not to anybody's house at all; I see her almost every hour in the day; she lieth in my bedchamber. If I can be more precise than I have been, I will be. I am bound in nature to be careful for Arbell; I find her loving and dutiful to me, nor more by me regarded than to accomplish her Majesty's

pleasure, and that which I think may be for her service. I would rather wish many deaths, than to see this, or any such like wicked attempt, to prevail.

"About a year since, there was one Harrison, a seminary, that lay at his brother's house about a mile from Hardwick, whom I thought then to have caused to been apprehended and to have sent him up, but found he had license for a time. Notwithstanding, the seminary soon after went from his brother's, finding how much discontent I was with his lying so near me. Since my coming now into the country, I had some intelligence that the same seminary was come again to his brother's house, my son William Cavendish went thither of a sudden to make search for him, but could not find him.. I write thus much to your Lordship, that if any such traitorous and naughty persons (through her Majesty's clemency) be suffered to go abroad, that they may not harbour near my houses, Wingfield, Hardwick, nor Chatsworth in Derbyshire; they are the likest instruments to put a bad matter in execution.

"One Morley, who hath attended on Arbell and read to her for the space of three years and a half, showed to be much discontented since my return into the country, in saying he had lived

in hope to have some annuity granted him by Arbell out of her land during his life, or some lease of ground to the value of forty pound a year, alleging that he was so much damnified by leaving of the University, and now saw that if she were willing, yet not of ability, to make him any such assurance. I, understanding by divers that Morley was so much discontented, and withal of late having some cause to be doubtful of his forwardness in religion (though I cannot charge him with Papistry), took occasion to part with him. After he was gone from my house, and all his stuff carried from him, the next day he returned again, very importunate to serve without standing upon any recompense, which made me more suspicious, and the more willing to part with him. I have another in my house, who will supply Morley's place very well for the time. I will have those that shall be sufficient in learning, honest and well-disposed, so near as I can. I am enforced to use the hand of my son William Cavendish, not being able to write so much myself, for fear of bringing yet great pain to my head. He only is privy to your Lordship's letter, and neither Arbell, nor any other living, nor shall be.

"I beseech your Lordship, I may be directed from you as occasion shall fall out. To the utter-

most of my understanding, I have been and will be careful. I beseech the Almighty to send your Lordship a long and happy life, and so I will commit your Lordship to his protection.—From my house at Hardwick the 21st of September, 1592.

"Your Lordship's as I am bound,

"E. SHREWSBURY.

"To the Right Honorable my very good Lord, the Lord Burghley, Lord Treasurer of England."

Another cause for alarm and suspicion now appeared in the shape of Father Parson's book on the Succession. Queen Mary's priests, as the Roman Catholics were called, had, since the reign of Elizabeth, been forbidden to practise their worship openly, or to maintain any university in England. To compensate for this, the English Catholics, at the instigation of a zealous priest, named Allen, had established a college at Douay for the education of missionaries, and some time after, Pope Gregory XIII., opened a similar college for the Jesuits at Rome. Father Allen then besought Mercurianus, the chief of the Jesuits at Rome, to send some of his order to the benighted English, and accordingly the two cleverest of the English students at the Roman college, viz., Robert Parsons and Edward Campion, were sent to England, there to practise every art, to turn

the English from their heretic Queen, and convince them that, even legally, the Tudors were about the last who had any claim to reign over them. In this last endeavour, Parsons was pre-eminent, and in 1594 he published, under the name of Richard Dolman, a book on the Succession, which, abused as it has been, we may safely say has been carefully studied—and used—by every historian of this period.

In this book Parsons so remorselessly laid open the arguments of the various pretenders to the crown, as to kindle the greatest alarm in the mind of the King of Scotland. Arabella's claims were fully discussed, and though not allowed, yet the effect was to bring her prominently before the public, and show to the princes of Europe, that if Father Parsons did not uphold her right, so many did, that it was a subject of importance, and by no means unworthy of the attention of any Catholic prince who had any designs on the English throne. At the same time, the Duke of Sessa wrote to the King of Spain, that the Pope suspected the Queen of England of treating with the Bearnois (Henry IV.) to repudiate his wife, and marry Arabella, and thus introduce him to the English Succession.* (July 13, 1596).

James could bear it no longer. He wrote to

* State Papers, Scot., lix., fol. 6, MS.

the King of Spain, offering to form a league with him and make war on Elizabeth, and even become a Roman Catholic, if Philip would only guarantee his succession. Among other causes of offence alleged by James, as reasons for making war, two are especially notable, viz., 1st, "The Act of Parliament passed by the English in the states of England a little before the condemnation and death of the Queen his mother, when it was enacted, that no person or persons might inherit the crown of England, that were descended from the kindred of such as had been condemned for conspiring against the Queen, the which Act was manifestly made to exclude the said King of Scotland from the succession to the crown of England." *

No greater folly could have been perpetrated by James, than in thus emphatically pointing out this Act to the friend of Parma. If the fact of his being a descendant of a conspirator were the *only* barrier to his succession, then, without necessity of plotting, the crown would devolve on Arabella, and if Philip ceded the claims of the Infanta as hopeless, it was far more likely that he would prefer to see Farnese, a friend, and possible tool of his own, on the English throne—a plan that

* Winwood, i., p. i. Butler's "Roman Catholics," where the authenticity of this proposal is discussed.

would also prevent the dreaded union of England with Scotland. After some more accusations, among which occurs that of Elizabeth's "causing the said King to be three or four times *taken into custody*," James declares "that the said Queen of England never would give the said King his father's estate that belonged to him in England, nor would she deliver up to him Arbella, his uncle's daughter, to be married to the Duke of Lenox in Scotland, at the time when the said King, having no issue, intended to make the said Duke, his successor, heir to the crown of Scotland, at which time the Queen uttered very harsh words, and of much contempt, against the King of Scotland." *

But though the Spanish party were possessed with the idea that Lord Burghley would support the claims of Arabella on the death of Elizabeth, and declared that he even intended to marry her to his own son, there appears to have been no reason to suppose the nation at large acknowledged this view. The different parties, blinded by their feelings, made a bugbear where none existed, and we can best judge of the state of the English people by the words of a calm, dispassionate observer of the time, viz., Henry IV. of France.

* Winwood, i.

"The King," says Sully, "began to consider with me what princess of Europe he should choose for his wife, in case his marriage with Margaret of Valois were dissolved. 'I should have no objection (said he) to the Infanta of Spain, provided that with her I could marry the Low Countries; neither would I refuse the Princess Arabella of England, if, since it is publicly said the crown of England really belongs to her, she were only declared presumptive heiress of it. But there is no reason to expect that either of these things will happen.' "*

The agony of James was at length calmed by the Danish Court, who, like Henry, saw that James was only injuring his cause by excitement, and advised him not to press his title, so long as Elizabeth lived, and by no means offend her.† Reports, however, of the intended marriage of Arabella, now to Henry IV., now to the Duke Mathias, kept him on the rack. He dreaded her marriage with any foreigner, under the belief that, in that age of ambition, no husband would allow her pretensions to sleep; but that she herself was indifferent to a crown, never once entered his head. When the report of her proposed marriage to Duke Mathias reached him, he

* Sully's "Memoirs," ii. p. 70.
† State Papers, Scot., lxiii., fol. 65, MS.

expressed his disbelief in it, "and," says George Nicolas, writing to Sir Robert Cecil, Feb. 16th, 1600, "he does not mistrust her Majesty's meaning on that point towards him, her Majesty having promised never to do any thing to his hurt."*

Meanwhile, the friends of Arabella seem to have acted with the utmost prudence. They appear to have held no communication with any of those who were so eager to put her forward as a candidate for the Succession, and though it was reported that Arabella herself had no objection whatever to become a Catholic and go to Spain, and had even commissioned agents to treat with the continental princes on the subject of marriage, there is not the slightest evidence of the truth of the report. The fate of Lady Jane Grey and Mary Stuart were too fresh in remembrance for so prudent a schemer as Bess, and she never suffered the slightest cause for suspicion of her, or Arabella's, loyalty to Queen Elizabeth. Among the new year's presents to the Queen for the year 1600 we find the following:—

"By the Countes of Shrewesbury †—a gowne of white sattin, leyed on with pasmane of golde, the vernewyse lyned with strawe collored Jarceonet—delivered to Rauf Hoope."

* State Papers, Scot., lxvi., fol. 11, MS.

† The wife of Gilbert.

"January 1st, 1600.—By the Barrones Arbella—one skarfe or head-vaile of lawne cut-worke, florished with silver and silke of sondry colors."

The terms on which Arabella and the Shrewsburys were with the Queen may be gathered by the following letter from Lady Stafford, with a present to Arabella from the Queen:—

The Lady Dorothy Stafford to the Countess of Shrewsbury.

"Right honorable and my very good Lady,—I have, according to the purport of your honorable Letters, presented your Ladyship's New Year's gift, together with my Lady Arbella's, to the Queen's Majesty, who hath very graciously accepted thereof, and taken an especial liking to my Lady Arbella's. It pleased her Majesty to tell me that, whereas, in former letters of your Ladyship's, your desire was that her Majesty would have that respect of my Lady Arbella, that she might be carefully bestowed to her Majesty's good liking; that, according to the contents of those letters, her Majesty told me, that she would be careful of her, and withal both returned a token to my Lady Arbella, which is not so good as I could wish it, nor so good as her Ladyship deserveth, in respect of the rareness of that which she sent unto her Majesty. But

I beseech you, good Madam, seeing it pleased her Majesty to say so much unto me touching her care of my Lady Arbella, that your Ladyship will vouchsafe me so much favour as to keep it to yourself, not making any other acquainted with it, but rather repose the trust in me for to take my opportunity for putting her Majesty in mind thereof, I will do as carefully as I can. And thus being always bound to your Ladyship for your honorable kindness toward me, I humbly commit your Ladyship to the safe protection of Almighty God.

"From Westmins., this 13th of January, 1600."

Nothing could put a stop to the intrigues of the Catholics, strengthened and encouraged as they were by the wishes and counsels of Pope Clement VIII. Still the plotting went on, and still the innocent victim was charged with being a party; for it was difficult to believe that a person supposed to benefit the most by a conspiracy should be the one in reality totally free from any such intention. The Queen's frowns grew darker, and Arabella was almost banished from Court. The prohibition to discuss the Succession at home drove many abroad, where they were eagerly received by the Pope, and encouraged in designs that appeared more mighty when backed by a foreign prince. Though the spies of Eliza-

beth, probably, greatly magnified the danger to her, in order, like all of their class, to increase their own importance, and enhance the price of their information, still the clearest proof exists, that it was not without cause that the Catholics were accused of tampering with foreign powers for the subjugation of their country to the Pope. The following letter from Cardinal D'Ossat, the plenipotentiary of Henry IV. of France, at Rome, lays bare the conduct of the English Catholics, the Pope, and the King of Spain. It may be relied on as safe evidence. D'Ossat had not the slightest cause for misrepresenting the truth. Though a Roman Catholic, he speaks with anything but reverence of his Holiness; he was in no way bound to either Rome, Spain, or England, and had the strongest motives for telling the simple truth to the least prejudiced monarch of the age. His position, too, gave him every facility for acquiring an accurate knowledge of the events that he transmitted to his master.

*Letter of the Cardinal D'Ossat to Henry IV. of France.**

"Sir,—I have heretofore, upon occasion, writ

* This letter is taken from a translation made by Birch in the Sloane MSS. The original may be found among the collected letters of Cardinal D'Ossat.

to your Majesty, that the Pope had some intent to prefer the Cardinal Farnese to the Succession of the Crown of England, after the decease of the Queen now reigning. Then, perceiving this resolution was not liked on that side, I lately, upon another occasion, writ to your Majesty, that I would send you an express of it by itself, which now, God willing, I shall perform by this.

"The Pope first thought of the Duke of Parma, as the elder brother, and his ally, and will do it the first, and it only, if his Holiness perceives the kingdom of England can be obtained without Arbella. But if, after the Queen's decease, Arbella should raise a strong party in England, and that, for the easier conquest of the Kingdom, it were necessary to join his forces with Arbella's; then, in this case, because he cannot treat of a marriage betwixt Arbella, and the Duke of Parma, already married, the Pope intends, instead of the Duke of Parma, to bring in the Cardinal, his brother, who might marry the said Arbella, and by those means, they, both joining their forces, would sooner, and easier compass their designs. And it was by occasion of the said Arbella, that I made the first mention of the Cardinal Farnese in a letter of mine of the 27th of March last. Now, because in all such matters there must be a shew and colour of justice, it is pretended, that

these two princes by their mother's side are descended from the true and lawful kings of England, and have some right of succession to the kingdom, without which pretence I believe the Pope had never thought of them. And now it may please your Majesty to remember that, in the year 1594, there was a book set forth in English, which the Spaniards got writ by a Jesuit called Parsons, and was spread through England, the Low Countries, and everywhere else where they thought the said book might further their intentions, which have been, and are still, to persuade the world that many hundred years since there hath been neither king nor queen lawful in England, being all excluded by the said book, because they were tainted with treason, or disinherited, or bastards, or heretics, or the like, and by consequence excluded also from the Succession to the said kingdom. After the Queen's death, all those that now are of the blood-royal of England, and such as are of next kin to the said Queen, as the King of Scotland, and Arbella, which are the nearest, and then the Earls of Derby, Hertford, and Hastings, and the Lords Arthur, and Galfrid Pole, to whom the said book doth nevertheless object some particular fault to exclude them all so much the more from the Succession, besides

those which he supposes to have been in them, that have reigned in these later times.

"After this fine book hath so excluded from the crown of England all Scottish and English, it strives to shew that the true right of Succession is fallen unto the late King of Spain and his children, bringing him in divers ways, and affirming, that the house of Portugal came by the Lady Philippa, daughter of John of Gaunt, son to King Edward III., and Blanche, only daughter and heir of Lancaster, who was the third son of Edmund, second son to Henry III., King of England, the which Lady Philippa was married to John, the First King of Portugal. The same book doth also pretend that all the Princesses of the House of Portugal unto this day are come of the said marriage. Now saith the books, all the rights and pretentions of the house of Britannia are fallen unto the Infanta of Spain, married to the Archduke Albertus, wherefore the rights of Succession to the crown of England also belong to the said Infanta, to whom he annexes the pretended rights two other ways specified in the book. He saith likewise that all the rights and pretentions of the house of Portugal are founded upon the person of the late King of Spain, Philip II., and to his children, therefore to him and to his children doth this day belong the Suc-

cession of the kingdom of England. And although the said proposition that is inferred from it be mightily strained, and, as it were, drawn by the hairs against all right and custom, and be for the most part false, yet, as your Majesty knows very well, the late King of Spain made always great account of it, and bent all his thoughts that way, as doth to this day the King of Spain, his son. And to that purpose it is that the Spaniards make so much of the English that are forced out of the kingdom for religion, and fled, not only into the Low Countries and Spain, but also unto France, Italy, and everywhere else; allowing them pensions and giving them many other gratuities, especially to those of whom they hope to get some notable service either through their nobility, kindred, or allies, or by their courage and valour. To that intent also are purposely erected by the Spaniards, the Colleges and Seminaries for the English at Douay and St. Omer, wherein are received young gentlemen of the best families of England, that by their means their kindred and friends in that kingdom may have an obligation laid upon them. And the chief care that is taken in these Colleges and Seminaries is that the young English gentlemen be catechised, nurtured, and brought up in the belief and strong faith that the late King of Spain had, and his children now

have, the true right of Succession to the crown of England, and that it must necessarily be so for the good of the Catholic Religion, not only in England but also through all Christendom. And when these young English gentlemen have done their studies in humanity and are come to a certain age, then, to make them up complete Spaniards, they are transported from the Low Countries into Spain, where they have other Colleges for them, and are there instructed in Philosophy and Divinity, and confirmed in the said belief and holy faith that the kingdom of England did belong to the late King Philip the Second, and doth at this day belong unto his children; and after these young English gentlemen have so finished their course of studies, those of them which are known to be the perfectest Spaniards, and most zealous and firm to the Spanish Credo, are sent into England, there to plant that faith and win to it such as have not stirred from the country, as also to spy and give notice to the Spaniards of what passes in England, and their best advice concerning that which they think ought and may be done to bring it under the power of Spain, and likewise, if need be, to suffer martyrdom as well or rather for the Spanish faith than the Catholic religion. The Spanish forces heretofore and lately sent into

Ireland are to this end as well in the meantime to take what they can from the Queen as to make it a bridge for themselves to go sometimes over into England. Besides, they are commodious of going or sending from the Low Countries, from whence there is but a short cut into England, as also from the coasts of Portugal, Galicia and Biscay, and by reason of the great number of ships that they have in all those places.

"But with all these ambitious designs, the Spaniards do foresee a main hindrance as well from the English themselves as from the King of Scotland, with his allies and confederates, and the Hollanders, but especially from France, and therefore, say they, the King of Spain will not have England for himself, but for his sister the Infanta, or some other Prince, whom we shall not suspect. And so have they persuaded the Pope (his Holiness at least makes a shew as if he believed it), but the plain truth is, that the King of Spain will have England to himself, and if he cannot get it because of the resistance, he wishes that the kingdom may come to his sister, or, if she fails, to some prince of his blood, who being helped by him may acknowledge himself beholden to him for that kingdom, and be altogether at his devotion against all others, and especially against your Majesty and France, to whom the

Spaniards have not only emulation but a mortal hatred.

"The Pope (now to speak of his Holiness) and his designs concerning the princes of Parma, foreseeing and believing the said opposition which is likely to be made against the King of Spain and his sister, doth imagine that he may soon bring it about to make the Duke of Parma, or the Cardinal Farnese, his brother, King of England after the Queen's decease, according to the distinction which I made at the beginning of this letter in respect to Arbella. Your Majesty will be easily persuaded that he wishes them that greatness, because of their alliance with him; and besides that, they are strong Catholics, and held to be good moderate princes, and in it his Holiness would think he did a work well pleasing to God and profitable to the Catholic religion. But what ground hath the Pope for compassing about his hopes? Indeed, he grounds himself upon many things, and first upon the said colour of justice, that these two princes are descended from the house of Portugal by Mary their mother, who was the eldest daughter of Edward, Infant of Portugal, and son to King Emanuel, adding to this the aforesaid proposition, that the true right of Succession to the crown of England be devolved to the house of Portugal. And as the

new Duke of Parma, who was called Renutio, had a pretention to the Succession of the kingdom of Portugal after the death of the Cardinal Henry, and that before the King of Spain, so is it now pretended that either he or the Cardinal Farnese, his brother, ought to succeed to the crown of England, in case at the least that the King of Spain be not able to get the said kingdom for himself or his sister, and as it is thought by most it will be impossible for him; and now this is all the shew of justice which gives a colour and pretext to the design, and might incline a party of the English to accept of either of these two. As for the forces and means to maintain this right, such a one as it is, against those who would oppose it, the Pope is of opinion that the King of Spain, finding himself unable to do anything either for himself or his sister, will easily be persuaded to employ his so mighty forces, and all that the late King his father hath left unto him, either of intelligences or interests, with a good many of the English, won at divers times and in many ways for the advancing one of the said princes of the house of Parma, who are his cousins german once removed and professed servants. His Holiness believes also that the Archdukes in the Low Countries will do the like when they perceive

they can do nothing for themselves; and that besides the nobility, the gentry, cities, and peoples of the Low Countries, will favour these two brethren of the house of Parma, by reason that the said Low Countries have been governed with a great deal of lenity, first by the Lady of Parma, their grandmother, who did never consent that the Earls of Egmont and Horn should be put to death, and since by the Duke Alexander their father, who left behind him a very good name in those countries, and obliged an infinite number of persons, and among them many English fled thither for a refuge. His Holiness is also resolved to help these two princes with all his strength of spiritual and temporal, and all his credit and authority with the princes, cities, and peoples that are Catholic. It is about four years since his Holiness created a certain arch priest, to whom all the ecclesiastics and Catholics of the said kingdom might resort and address themselves, and understand what is best to be done for their preservation and the re-establishing of the Catholic religion. And his Holiness is persuaded by some, that this is the likeliest way to make the English Catholics forward in the effecting of his desires. And I can assure your Majesty that his Holiness hath of late sent three briefs to the nuncio whom he keeps in

the Low Countries, which are to be concealed till he heareth news of the Queen's death, and then to be sent over into England, the one to the clergy, the second to the nobility, and the third to the canons, according to the several directions of the said brief, by which the three estates of England are admonished and exhorted to stand united together, for the receiving a Catholic King whom his Holiness will name unto them, such as they shall think most pleasing, profitable, and honourable, and all this for the honour and glory of God, the re-establishing the Catholic religion, and the salvation of their souls.

"I have heretofore told your Majesty how his Holiness hath given to the Cardinal Farnese the protection of England void by the death of the Cardinal Cajetan, that all the English Catholics who are in these parts, or have any business in this court, may resort to him and give him occasion of doing them good, and winning the good liking and opinion of that nation.

"I have also heretofore made known to your Majesty how the said Cardinal Farnese keeps in his service Arthur Pole, who is of royal blood of England, and that the said Arthur is to make a voyage into England the next spring by consent, if not by commission, of his master and the Pope himself. There may be many things and more

tending to this design which we know not, for they do what they can to keep them close, and who knows but the Duke of Parma's journey to the Court of Spain and into Portugal may be to that intent, especially if it be true that is said here, that in his return he is to go through France? Now besides that his Holiness will help these two princes with all his means, and will get them others' help, he thinks that in those princes from whom he can get no aid for them, he shall at the least diminish the resistance and opposition which otherwise they would make against them, and because your Majesty's opposition is most of all to be feared, his Holiness thinks he hath deserved and may hereafter deserve in many occasions so much from your Majesty that if you will not help his allies, at the least you do not oppose them, and hath such confidence in your Majesty, that upon it without coming to any particulars he hath already sent you word by the Cardinal that he wishes your Majesty and the King of Spain would agree about a third, a Catholic prince, to make him King of England after the Queen's decease. And though your Majesty made them some favorable answer for the King of Scotland, yet his Holiness is in hope that your Majesty will be persuaded by reason of State not to further the conjunction of the kingdoms of Eng-

land and Scotland in one person, considering what great damage the English alone have sometimes done to the French more than all other nations together, besides that the King of Scotland is a near kinsman and friend to the princes of the house of Lorraine, who have grown many in number and too great in power through the want of foresight and the too great frailty of our late Kings, and have lately invaded almost all France, it being to be feared that they will never leave that desire by reason of that inbred opinion of theirs that the third race of our Kings, beginning with Hugh Capet, hath usurped the kingdom of France from them, and that the crown of France doth of right belong to the house of Lorraine, descending as they pretend, though falsely, from Charlemagne. Hence his Holiness draws this opinion, that your Majesty will rather admit for King of England the Duke of Parma, or the Cardinal Farnese his brother, who have nothing near England, neither in nor near France, than the King of Scotland or the archduke, or any such. And howbeit these two princes of Parma are of kin and servants to the King of Spain, his Holiness doth nevertheless believe your Majesty will on the other side consider that they are his allies, and are not of the worst nor of the nearest, nor the best pleased with the King of Spain, and

that this house of Parma hath sometimes been under the protection of the crown of France. He would also persuade us that they have lost neither the memory nor the gratitude of it, what seeming soever they have been reduced and forced to by the necessity of the times. And indeed the Cardinal Farnese, in the answer to a letter that I had writ him upon the birth of my Lord the Dauphin, did not forget, among other occasions of his joy, to mention the obligations which their house had to the crown of France, as he may perhaps have done in the letter which he writ to your Majesty upon the subject. To these, many other things may be added, as that, when either of them should be made King of England, he would not so much observe the will and interest of the King of Spain, as think of establishing himself and keeping fair with his neighbours, and with your Majesty, who might more than any other annoy or help him.

"Now, sir, these are the considerations which made me believe the probability of this design of the Pope, since the first time that I was told it from a very good place, and because I had divers times touched of it in my former letters. I have now gathered them all in this, adding to them what I have learned since, and this is to perform my promise of writing a letter of these things by

itself. Whatsoever this be, it cannot but conduce to the good of your Majesty to be advertised of what may come to pass, that so you may provide a good while before, in a business of so great importance, and be ready upon all events.

"To this I can add nothing but assure your Majesty that in all this I did not intend to intrude myself to give any advice, directly or indirectly, concerning the Succession of England, much less which way it is fit for your Majesty to incline, but only to shew the considerations, which may have moved the Pope to think upon these two brethren, and if I have writ upon it heretofore, it hath not been without some ground for it.

"From Rome, the 26th of November, 1601." *

* For an extract from a curious Italian MS. on this subject in possession of Sir Thomas Phillipps. See Appendix II. 2.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ENGLISH SUCCESSION.

"THE Right Divine of Kings" is a phrase singularly inappropriate to be used in our country. From the days when the old Celtic Princes stained the forest leaves with blood in their struggles for the Right by Power, through ages that followed of Roman, Saxon, Danish, and Norman rulers, the proud English people have laughed at Royalty as in any way connected with Divinity. Even the laws of primogeniture have been constantly disregarded, and so lightly have they been held, that, in the early Norman days, the eldest son was as coolly set aside when he had committed no fault, as when his crimes demanded such a punishment. The right of the son to succeed his father in his grandfather's heritage was a matter of grave dispute, and frequently decided in favour of the father's brother, as a nearer relation to the grandfather than the grandson. By the time of Edward III., however, the

crown of England had become so firmly settled on him, that all other pretenders sank in obscurity, and it was among his descendants alone that the future claimants arose. Of all subjects genealogies are, perhaps, the most wearisome, and much patience is required to leave the present actions of men, and wander into shadowy regions with no other purpose than to disentangle a mass of names. Yet this uninteresting task must be performed by all who would gain a clear idea of the history of England, and is especially necessary to the comprehension of the present volumes. From the sons of Edward III., and especially of John of Gaunt, came the conflicting claims that for centuries plunged England into civil war, that gave excuses for foreign invasion, and hung a terror over every king that sat upon the throne. These kings knew the defects in their titles, and that they reigned, not by any infallible authority, but by the sufferance of their subjects, and were careful in their most outrageous moments to show due reverence to the real power that upheld them. It was reserved for the weak brain of a Stuart to pass this limit, and what was the consequence all the world knows.

Leaving those sons of Edward III. who died without issue, five remain, viz. :—

1. Edward, the Black Prince.
2. Lionel, Duke of Clarence.
3. John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.
4. Edmund Langley, Duke of York.
5. Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester.

The line of the Black Prince being extinct at the death of Richard II., according to the laws of primogeniture, the next heir would be found among the descendants of Lionel, Duke of Clarence. Like the Black Prince, Lionel died before his father, leaving an only child, a daughter, Philippa, who married Edward Mortimer, Earl of March. Her granddaughter married the son of Edmund Langley, Duke of York, and thus brought her claim to the house of York, where it slept, doubtless disturbed by many dreams, till the reign of Henry VI.

According to all modern ideas of hereditary succession, the house of York, or as it should be called, the house of Clarence, had the undoubted right; but, according to the opinion that the nearest relation to the king ought to succeed him, then John of Gaunt was the true heir to Edward III. after the death of the Black Prince and the Duke of Clarence. So well aware were the Black Prince and the King of this feeling, that the Black Prince exacted from his father a promise that, in case of his death, his son Richard

should succeed him, to the exclusion of John of Gaunt; and on the death of the Black Prince, the King deemed it necessary to procure an Act of Parliament by which Richard was declared his successor. But though John of Gaunt yielded, in the opinion of many Richard was only a usurper of his uncle's throne, and consequently when, before the death of Richard, Henry Bolingbroke assumed the throne, in the general opinion he claimed nothing but his right, seeing that, if John of Gaunt had been king, Bolingbroke would have been the lawful heir to the crown. John of Gaunt was married three times, and it was by the descendants of his three wives that the claims of the house of Lancaster became so multiplied, and were even carried into foreign countries and vested in foreign princes.

The first wife of John of Gaunt was his cousin Blanche, daughter of the Duke of Lancaster, who, inheriting her father's title, brought it to her husband, and thus John of Gaunt became Duke of Lancaster. By Blanche he had three children, viz., Henry Bolingbroke, who succeeded him, and two daughters, viz., Philippa, who was married to John I. of Portugal, and Elizabeth, who was married to John Holland, Duke of Exeter. On the extinction of the line of Bolingbroke by the murder of Prince Edward, son to Henry VI.,

the descendants of Philippa, the Portuguese queen, claimed the English crown.

But another race existed. On the death of Blanche, John of Gaunt had married Constance, the daughter and heir of Peter the Cruel of Castile, and as he had taken the title of Duke of Lancaster from his first wife, he now assumed that of King of Castile from his second. By Constance of Castile he had one daughter, Catherine, who marrying Henry III. of Castile, became the mother of the line of Isabella the Catholic, and thus of Philip II., who claimed a direct descent from John of Gaunt.

The third wife of John of Gaunt was Catherine Swynford, a Flemish woman of no family, who became the mistress of John of Gaunt, and the mother of three illegitimate sons, viz. John, Duke of Somerset, Thomas, Marquis of Dorset and Duke of Exeter, and Henry, Bishop of Winchester and Cardinal; and one daughter, who married the Earl of Westmoreland. On the marriage of John of Gaunt with Catherine Swynford, he obtained an Act of Parliament to legitimatize these four children, and they thus took their place among the claimants to the crown, certainly, we might think, with a very poor chance of success. Yet, to the exclusion of the legitimate descendants of the other wives, the des-

cendant of John, Duke of Somerset, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, claimed and obtained the English crown; and though he strengthened his claim by his alliance with Elizabeth, representative of York, it must be remembered that he never asserted his right to the crown through her, or in any other way than as an heir of Lancaster, declaring that he ought to be preferred before the descendants of John of Gaunt's first wives, seeing that he came from a son and they from a daughter of the duke. As the Duke of Somerset was never considered a lawful heir, even though afterwards legitimatized in England, a claim resting on such a statement must be pronounced doubtful, and certainly unjust. It was scarcely to be expected that the descendants of the two first wives should admit it, and as long as there was a party to the claims of Lancaster, the legitimate heir to that house was to be sought in the descendant of John of Gaunt's first wife. That claim was now vested in a foreigner, and, like that of York, in the first days, was allowed to sleep awhile. It is remarkable that Henry VIII., who is by some considered to have divorced his first wife, and married his third the very day after the execution of his second, for no other motive than that of leaving the English Succession free from difficulties,

should have been the very man to have fearfully added to them, and inserted another knot in the already tangled skein.

On the death of his three children without issue, the crown came naturally to the descendants of his eldest sister, Margaret, to whom Henry had an intense personal dislike. Yet, for no better reason than this dislike, one of Henry's last acts was to make a will leaving the Succession (after the deaths of his own children without issue) to the descendants of his younger sister Mary, who was a favourite, thus entailing a possible civil war and certain jealousy on the unhappy descendants of the two sisters. I shall enlarge more fully on the fate of one of the victims to this act of the patriotic monarch in another chapter. The people of England were made of sterner material than to be left by the testament of any king as so many goods and chattels, but the result of the will of Henry VIII. was hatred, imprisonment, and death to individuals, and afforded a precedent to his son Edward VI., who, in his turn, left the crown to his favourite, Lady Jane Grey.

As regards the English Succession (I speak of that alone), no more politic match could have been formed than that of Philip II. and Mary. It was the true union of the houses of York and Lancaster. Mary was the direct representative

of the house of York through her grandmother; Philip was a lineal descendant, by his mother, the eldest daughter of the King of Portugal, of Blanche, first wife of John of Gaunt, and, by his father, of Constance, the second wife. It is true that he was not the acknowledged heir of the last King of Portugal, as that monarch had left a younger son, but, as far as consanguinity went, the foundation on which the house of Lancaster had always rested their claims, he was the true representative, and a child of Philip and Mary would have had a greater claim to the English throne, on every hereditary ground, than any king since the time of Edward III. If, however, the Succession to the crown of Portugal were traced in the male line, then the direct descendant of Blanche of Lancaster, first wife of John of Gaunt, was Ranuzio, Duke of Parma, to whom the Pope had the first idea of marrying Arabella Stuart, and who was willing to renounce his claims in favour of his brother the Cardinal. It was therefore not without grounds that Farnese laid claim to the English crown, nor that Elizabeth saw in his pretensions the rallying point for a league against her, and in this state of affairs it was perfectly just that Arabella should be forbidden to leave the kingdom, a mandate which she did not in the least dispute. With such

conspiracies and claims abroad, and with so many parties among the nobles at home, Elizabeth wisely turned to the true source of her strength, the only power that could possibly have carried her safely through the conflicting storms. When the ambassador of Philip reminded her of her obligations to him, she answered, "For her present prospects she was indebted neither to the king, nor to the English lords, however much these latter might vaunt their fidelity. It was to the people that she owed them, and on the people she relied."

"The Queen," says Sir John Harrington, "did once ask my wife in merry sort how she kept my good will and love, which I did always maintain to be truly good, towards her and my children? My Mall in wise and discreet manner told her Highness she had confidence in her husband's understanding and courage, well founded on her own steadfastness not to offend or thwart, but to cherish and obey; hereby she did persuade her husband of her own affections, and in so doing did command his. 'Go to, go to, mistress,' said the Queen, 'you are wisely bent, I find; after such sort do I keep the goodwill of all my husbands, my good people, for if they did not rest assured of some special love toward them, they would not readily yield me such good obedience.'"

The most insidious enemies of Elizabeth were the Jesuits. They first came to England in the year 1580, and from that time distilled a secret poison over the length and breadth of the land. They entered by "secret creeks and landing-places," and, clad in every species of disguise, insinuated themselves into every corner where they could work mischief. Sometimes they appeared as soldiers or sailors, at others as private gentlemen, merchants, travellers from foreign parts, or "gallants with feathers," and clad in velvet. Among their employés were dissolute young men, who, either from poverty or crime, had become fugitives, and were ready to adopt the basest means to earn a livelihood without honest labour. Others were young Roman Catholics, who, enraged by the early persecutions of Elizabeth, and educated by her bitterest enemies, were persuaded that, to obey the mandates of the Pope against the Queen, was literally to serve God rather than Mammon; and that, exerting their utmost against Antichrist in the person of the Queen, and endeavouring to place a Catholic, even though a foreigner, on her throne, was the purest way of serving God and their country. The means were sanctified by the end. Consequently it was deemed no disgrace by Englishmen to accept pensions and presents at the hands of the King

of Spain and the Pope, nor any dishonour to obtain a footing by any amount of falsehood in private families, where, by means of eavesdropping, bribery, and cunning, the weak members were discovered and turned to foreign service. Armed with Papal bulls, and indulgences, and threats, they worked on the weaker minds of the community, and prepared them for the perpetration of the basest crimes. The Queen's life was repeatedly aimed at. A book was published exhorting her women "to commit the like against her that Judith did to Holofernes." She was shot at as she passed down the river in her barge. She was declared a usurper, whom it was a pious act to get rid of by any means. Her cooks were tempted to poison her; and (remembering the recent murder of Henry III. of France by a Jesuit, and the subsequent similar fate of his successor, how, no farther back than the last reign, the Roman Catholics had held supreme power in England, and their overwhelming force on the Continent) Elizabeth may well be excused for many measures that in the present day would be the height of tyranny. The Protestant religion has long been strong enough to stand without external aid in England. We want no laws to support it, no swords to defend it; and so far from any courage being needed on its

behalf, we can insult with impunity the highest authority who dares to differ from it.

But the days of Elizabeth were very different. Protestantism was in its infancy; darkness and terror hung around its cradle, and its early protectors may be pardoned, if amid the host of seen, and still greater host of unseen, but suspected dangers, they struck rather indiscriminately, and required pledges that were in reality not exacted by bigotry so much as by anxiety for the safety of the realm. The fires of Smithfield, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the *autos-da-fé* of Spain, the fiendish cruelties of Alva in the Netherlands, showed the spirit manifested by the Catholics towards the Protestants in the age of Elizabeth. What wonder if the latter felt that it was no time for half measures or for hesitation? When we remember that the Catholics, by means of the Jesuits, were doing their very best to introduce into England the horrors perpetrated on the Continent, and that, by the murder of the King of France, they had proved no crime too great to be committed by them to promote their schemes, we shall be more ready to admit that the persecution of the Catholics by Queen Elizabeth was in reality nothing but an act of self-defence, and therefore not for a moment to be compared with the bigoted cruelties of Mary and Philip. The

strongest of the weapons of the Jesuits was the disputed Succession to the crown. By this they hoped to split the kingdom into parties, and thereby weaken the allegiance to the Queen. By this they hoped to crown a puppet of the Pope, who would prove simply an agent to carry out all their schemes; and the uncertainty as to how far Arabella Stuart was willing to play this part, or whether she was wholly innocent, was not experienced by Elizabeth alone. In 1601, Lord Henry Howard writes to the Earl of Mar: "My Lord of Shrewsbury, of whose idol's (Arabella's) sublimation, or at the least of a purpose to make her higher by as many steps as to ascend a scaffold." *

This is the first indication, whether true or false, of the relations of Arabella forgetting their usual caution. The next year we find an allusion by the same writer, which is worthy of note, as being written long before Sir Walter Raleigh was accused of plotting on behalf of Arabella. Mary Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, was thought to be quite as ambitious, but far less cautious than the Dowager Bess; and referring to the former, Lord Howard writes to Mr. Edward Bruce: "The league is very strong between Sir Walter Raleigh and my Lady of Shrewsbury,

* Cecil's "Secret Correspondence."

and Sir Walter Raleigh's wife. She is a most dangerous woman, and full of her father's inventions." *

And now the report reached King James that Arabella had become so far entangled by the plotters as to renounce the Protestant religion, and he wrote the following kindly words to Lord Henry Howard:—

"I am from my heart sorry for this accident fallen to Arbell, but as nature enforceth me to love her as the creature nearest of kin to me next my own children, so would I, for her own weal, that such order were taken as she might be preserved from evil company, and that evil inclined persons might not have access unto her to supplant, abusing of the frailty of her youth and sex; for if it be true, as I am credibly informed, that she is lately moved by the persuasion of the Jesuits to change her religion and declare herself Catholic, it may easily be judged that she hath been very evil attended on by them that should have had greater care of her, when persons so odious, not only to all good Englishmen, but to all the rest of the world, Spain only excepted, should have access to have conferred with her at such leisure as to have disputed and moved her in matters of religion."

* Cecil's "Secret Correspondence."

This letter is the strongest presumptive evidence that I have been able to discover in favour of the assertion that Arabella was a Roman Catholic. It proves decisively that she was educated as a Protestant. If the person who "credibly informed" James of Arabella's conversion told the truth, it was a truth involving a far greater matter than a mere change of creed. In such a case, at such a time, and under such circumstances, it might be taken as the proof of her guilt and the justice of the suspicions of the Queen. To become a Catholic at such a moment was to become a conspirator aided by foreign gold and foreign powers.

But not only is the evidence offered by this letter merely presumptive, but later on we shall be able to show that, in England at least, she was not considered to have changed her creed. In our own day, when the matter is not of the slightest importance, when, if the greatest nobles in the land were to become Roman Catholics, the affairs of the kingdom would not change by a hair's breadth, we know that, from time to time, the cry is raised without the smallest foundation that some titled personage has become a popish convert. But in the time of Arabella, such consequences followed upon conversion, and, more especially in her case, so many wished for her

conversion, that the propensity to circulate these groundless stories was ten times as great. Both the ambitious Catholics and the friends of James were interested in the conversion of Arabella, and to their excited feelings rather than to any reality we must ascribe a tale that is utterly uncorroborated by any of the letters written by her, or those most intimately acquainted with her.

But another event now took place, one that roused the hatred of Elizabeth and eventually that of James, for reasons that will be hereafter explained at length.

While foreign princes were busy proposing royal bridegrooms and forming ambitious schemes in which Arabella was to bear the principal part, she herself, who was dazzled by none of these, was accused of an act which to modern ideas appears extraordinary, but which, judged by the customs of the age, the only just mode of judging, would have been simply in accordance with those customs.

In the month of February, 1603, when Arabella was twenty-seven years old, she was arrested by order of Queen Elizabeth on the charge of attempting to betroth herself to William Seymour, grandson of the Earl of Hertford.

In order to show why this betrothal should so have affected the Queen, and to account

for the consequences that followed, we must leave Arabella for a time, to follow a history as sad as any that ever was created by romance, and which forms one of the darkest spots on the character of the great Queen.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STORY OF KATHERINE GREY.

THE will of Henry VIII. has already been mentioned. In the 35th year of the reign of that monarch, a statute was passed enabling him to dispose of the Succession to the crown according to his pleasure. Henry took advantage of this authority to disinherit the line of his elder sister, the Scotch queen, Margaret, and to substitute the descendants of his younger sister, Mary, Queen Dowager of France, who, on the death of her first husband, had married Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, the favourite of Henry.

Mary left two daughters, viz., Frances, married to Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk, and Eleanor, married to the Earl of Cumberland. Frances became the mother of three daughters, viz., the Lady Jane Grey, married to Lord Guildford Dudley; second, the Lady Katherine; third, the Lady Mary. The Duchess Frances renounced her rights, or rather claims, to the Succession in

favour of her daughter Jane, who was appointed heir by Edward VI.; and during the last year of that monarch's life, Katherine, the second daughter, was married to Henry, Lord Herbert, eldest son of the Earl of Pembroke, who thought to win a great prize by marrying a princess of the blood royal, and a sister of the future queen.

The melancholy fate of Lady Jane Grey shattered these golden prospects. The house of Grey lay low in the dust, and an alliance with it was fraught with danger and the certain disfavour of the gloomy Queen Mary. Katherine was only fifteen years old at the time of her marriage. She was the favourite sister of Lady Jane, whose last act the night before her execution was to write a letter on the leaf of her Greek Testament for her young sister Katherine. The bloody death of Jane was soon followed by that of the Duke of Suffolk; and, in the course of a few weeks, Katherine had to sustain another loss, that was accompanied by such baseness and insult as, in a more fiery spirit, would almost have extinguished the last sense of grief. At the very time when her young heart was crushed with the overwhelming loss of her sister and father, her husband, of whom it is impossible to think without unmitigated scorn and indignation,

divorced her, in order to retain the favour of Queen Mary. Katherine uttered no word of complaint or remonstrance, though she wept silently so bitterly that a lasting testimony of her grief remained in the paleness of her cheeks as long as she lived. She resumed her maiden name, and, by command of Queen Mary, retained her place as lady of honour to the Queen.

At the Court of Mary, she formed an intimate and romantic friendship with the Lady Jane Seymour. Jane Seymour was the eldest daughter of the Protector Somerset, and had been destined by her father to become the bride of Edward VI. She received a learned education, and, by means of Somerset, was on familiar terms with Edward, with whom she corresponded in Latin. With her sisters, she rendered herself famous by some Latin verses on the death of Margaret of Valois, which were published at Paris, and translated into several languages, and she bade fair, in time, to rival the reputation of Lady Jane Grey.* But, like those of Katherine, her hopes perished on the scaffold of her father, and the similarity of their fate doubtless tended to deepen their mutual sympathy, and draw the two orphan girls more closely together.

* See a letter of Jane Seymour in Mrs. Everett Green's "Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies."

Though three years younger than Katherine, Jane's was the ruling mind. Her name, her acquirements, so like to those of the lost Jane Grey, were sure to bind her to Katherine, who recognised her superior in everything but love, and her equal even in that. It was another instance of the stronger ruling the weaker mind. But in this case the strong mind was one of the noblest texture. All its strength and fervour were exerted for those it loved, and in the short life of Jane Seymour we find recorded not a single selfish act to her friend, or the least hesitation to aid in her happiness from fear of any consequences to herself.

The two girls became inseparable. Katherine leaned her whole soul on Jane. To her she spoke of her past griefs, of her dead sister, of her strange widowhood, and from her she received the tenderest sympathy and the softest consolation. When Jane visited her mother she spoke of Katherine, and revealed those inner graces of her friend which were hidden from the world, and were of necessity veiled in the gloomy and suspicious Court.

Suddenly Jane was seized with an illness which obliged her to be sent home. Katherine obtained permission to accompany her, and, with her gentle friend and the mother of the maids

of honour, Jane was carried in a horse litter to Hanworth, the residence of her mother, the Duchess of Somerset.

Jane slowly recovered, and, during her convalescence, Katherine, released from the restraints of the Court, appeared in all her sweet and simple character, and proved the undoubted truth, that those women who are the kindest and most loving to woman are also the most faithful and unselfish to man.

Edward Seymour, afterwards Earl of Hertford, and eldest son of the Protector Somerset, was one year older than Katherine. The most intense attachment subsisted between him and his sister Jane, and each was ready to make any sacrifice for the happiness of the other. Many conversations, we may be sure, had passed between them on the subject of Katherine, and Seymour was already full of that pity which is so near akin to love. The personal acquaintance with Katherine soon gave a colour to this feeling, and when she came under his mother's roof, and he watched her gentle ways and attachment to his sister, his sympathy deepened into tenderness and melted into love. The noble character of his sister had inspired him with a deep respect for women, and though his mother complains of him as "troublesome," and Lord Burghley received a

letter from the tutor of his son to the effect that Seymour hindered him in his studies, yet the manner of his wooing was such as betokened anything but that of the conceited young gallants of his day.

Very few men would have stood in awe of the simple, humble-minded Katherine. In her unfortunate circumstances, the daughter of a beheaded traitor, and herself a rejected and contemptuously divorced wife, the member of a disgraced family, most would have felt quite sure of her, and that she would receive an offer of marriage from one of the proudest houses in the land with profound gratitude at the least. But Seymour manifested no such self-confidence, and was more timid in preferring his suit to her now, in her days of darkness and grief, than the son of Pembroke had been, when, as the sister of a regal heiress, she stood at the summit of her prosperity. She had no remarkable beauty, no brilliant talents, but little wealth—nothing but love to give him in return for all he offered, for as to her royal blood, that was the very danger that had driven away her husband on account of the jealousy it occasioned the Queen. But Seymour weighed that love, and thought it worth more than all the world besides, if only he could win it, and he esteemed it so precious

that he thought nothing he could offer worthy to set against it. And so, not daring to speak to her himself, he "first procured with his sister to break with the said Lady Katherine touching marriage."*

Then Katherine confessed to Jane that she, too, had not been brought in such close contact to remain untouched, and that her heart was Seymour's already, even before he asked for it.

And now the great barrier was broken down, and that mysterious word was spoken which revealed the truth to these two illustrious hearts. They solemnly promised to be true to each other, and Seymour gave Katherine a ring, made of five links of gold, with a pointed diamond in the fifth link, and engraved on the other four links, a line on each, was the following posy of Seymour's composition :—

"As circles five by art compact shew but one Ring in sight,
So trust uniteth faithfull mindes with knot of secret might,
Whose force to breake but greedie Death noe wight possesseth power,
As time and sequels well shall prove. My Ring can say no more."

Parents at that time were comparative strangers to their children, and, indeed, treated them as such. The form, and ceremony, and cold respect exacted were anything but calculated to

* Examination of the Earl of Hertford, Harl. MSS. 249.

win a child's confidence. Marriages were generally arranged by the parents, solely with regard to worldly circumstances; the heart or head had little to do with the matter. The only remaining parent of Katherine is included in the description given of both her parents by Lady Jane Grey to Roger Ascham. From her we learn that the Duchess Frances was "sharp and severe," in whose presence, "whether she did speak, keep silence, sit, stand or go, eat, drink, be merry or sad, be sewing or playing, drawing, or doing anything else, she must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure, and number, even so perfectly as God made the world, or else she was so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea, presently, sometimes with pinches, nips, and bobs, so without measure misordered, that she thought herself in hell."

The mother of Seymour was Anne, Duchess of Somerset, who is described by Sir John Hayward as a "mannish, or rather a *divelish* woman, for many imperfectibilities intollerable, but for pride monstrous, exceeding subtle and violent." Personal spite has doubtless coloured the latter description, but evidence sufficient remains of the characters of the two mothers to prevent any surprise that Seymour "did use the Lady Jane, his sister, for the only instrument or means to

further his purpose;" and, being questioned whether he did impart this matter unto the Lady his Mother, he said "he never did."*

To maintain the same coldness to each other in the same house, proved too hard a task for Seymour and Katherine; and the Lady Mother of Seymour, "perceiving familiarity and goodwill between the Lady Katherine and him, did often admonish him to abstain from her company, whereupon he answered his mother that young folks meaning well might well accompany together, and that both in that house and also in the Court, he trusted he might use her company, being not forbidden by the Queen's express commandment."† The betrothal was kept a profound secret from all but the faithful sister, and Jane and Katherine returned to Court.

In 1558, Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne, and hope revived the hearts of the lovers. The Queen treated Seymour with marked favour, restoring to him most of the estates and titles forfeited at his father's death, and recognising him as Earl of Hertford. The Duchess Frances of Suffolk, who had been one of the sternest and most rigid of parents, had become softened by misfortune and by a second marriage

* Examination of the Earl of Hertford, Harl. MSS. 249.

† Ibid.

with Adrian Stokes, a gentleman of her household; and her declining health probably made her wish to see her daughters settled before her death. Seymour, now Earl of Hertford, therefore, without revealing the fact that he and Katherine had long ago already betrothed themselves to each other, rode to the Charter House, the residence of the Duchess Frances, "and there he moved the said Lady Frances to grant her good-will that he might marry the Lady Katherine, her daughter." The Duchess thought him "a very fit husband" for her daughter, and immediately sent for her to return from Court, if the Queen would give her leave. Katherine, ignorant of what awaited her, obtained the desired permission, and, on her arrival at home, her mother told her that "now she had provided a husband for her if she would like well of it, willing her to frame her fancy and good-will that way."* Then Katherine, without referring to the past, dutifully signified her willingness to accept the husband provided for her; and the Duchess told Hertford that the Queen's permission was the only thing to be obtained, and that she herself would write to her Majesty, asking her good-will to the marriage.

The rough draft of the letter to the Queen was actually made, but before the Duchess had

* Examination of Katherine Hertford, Harl. MSS. 249.

time to copy and send it to the Queen, she was seized with a sudden access of illness, and soon after expired. She was buried with great pomp in Westminster Abbey, where a marble monument, erected by Queen Elizabeth, commemorates the Duchess Frances, the daughter of the French Queen, and the mother of Jane and Katherine Grey.

The death of the Duchess of course deferred the application to the Queen, and before a due period had elapsed, Queen Elizabeth had not only given such unmistakeable proofs of her aversion to matrimony, but also of her personal dislike to her cousin Katherine, that the lovers feared that to ask her consent would result in obtaining her decisive prohibition.

The jealous fears with which Elizabeth always regarded a possible successor, were naturally stronger at the beginning of her reign, when her throne rested on a precarious foundation, and she had had no time to ingratiate herself with the people. The will of her father, it is true, was mislaid purposely or accidentally, and the question of the signature was a disputed point, but the probability is that Elizabeth in her own heart never doubted the genuineness of the will, and it is certain that it was recognised by those she feared the most. Philip II. so openly acknow-

ledged the pretensions of Lady Katherine, who, according to this will, was heiress-presumptive to the crown of England, that it was even reported that he had offered a sum of money to any one who would bring her to Spain.* The Spanish ambassador, De Feria, was on intimate terms with her. Writing to the King of Spain, he says:—"The Lady Katherine is a good friend of mine, and talks to me in confidence. The Queen, she says, does not like to think of her as her possible successor. The late Queen took her into the privy chamber and was kind to her. She complains that now she is out of favour and finds nothing but discourtesy. I keep on good terms with my Lady Katherine; she promises for her part not to change her religion, and not marry without my consent." †

The last sentence has been alleged as a proof of Katherine's intrigues against the Queen, and of her willingness to become a Roman Catholic. That Katherine, treated with repulsive coldness by the Queen, and losing hope of obtaining her permission to her union with the object of her love, should have greeted the advances of a powerful ambassador, who wished to become her

* Froude's "Hist. of England," vii. p. 93; Camden, ii. p. 373; Wright's "Elizabeth."

† Froude's "Hist. of Eng." vii. p. 70.

friend was natural enough. To the friendless, any protector seems welcome; and Katherine's was not the nature to penetrate deep political designs behind the mask of friendship. That she should have given utterance to reproaches against her royal cousin was natural too, but that those reproaches had any reference to a plot against Elizabeth, requires stronger proof than mere assertion. And no proof whatever has been adduced of a plot on the part of Katherine that could afford the shadow of an excuse for the treatment she received at the hands of Elizabeth. It was not ambition, but love in its truest sense, that wrecked the life of this unfortunate scion of the house of Tudor.

But though dwelling beneath the dark shadow of the royal frown, terribly significant in those days of despotism, the young Earl clung to his heart's choice, and, to use the words of Katherine, "the love did continue or rather increased between the Earl and her, with sundry meetings between them as time might serve, and as folks of that sort will do without making any creature living of their counsel, saving the Lady Jane, and one Elyne, the servant of the said Lady Jane."

"Tokens" and "sweet words" were constantly exchanged by the aid of the same faithful mes-

senger, when suddenly a cloud more black than even the anger of the Queen rose over the devoted pair. Some person informed Lady Katherine that the Earl, her true and noble Hertford, was at that very moment paying his addresses to another lady.

Katherine was very humble-minded, but, if pride had not awakened then, she would have been no true woman, and have proved that she had never truly loved. She forbade Hertford her presence, and broke the engagement, and Hertford was at liberty—free from the entanglement of which he had had ample time to repent, if he thought of prudence and worldly wisdom. But the Earl besought Katherine to grant him an interview, in which he said he would prove his truth. Katherine "was very willing to hear him," desiring "nothing more;* and when he came to see her, he convinced her that he had been slandered, and as he said, to prevent further suspicion, and because she should not think that he intended to mock her, he asked her to marry him as soon as the Queen should come next to London, if a convenient time might be found for the purpose," "and then," he added, "should she be sure and out of all

* Examination of the Earl and Countess of Hertford, Harl. MSS. 249.

doubt."* This was all said in the hearing of the Lady Jane.

Then Katherine answered, that "weighing his long suit and good-will borne to her, she was content to marry him the next time the Queen should go abroad and leave her and Lady Jane behind." She then confessed that his love was not greater than hers, and "without any other ceremony," says the Earl, "but kissing and embracing and joining their hands together,"† they separated.

It was some time before the desired opportunity arrived. But at last the day came. The Queen appointed a hunting expedition to Eltham, and Katherine and Jane, with some other maids of honour, were to be left behind at Whitehall. Jane immediately sent word to her brother that the propitious hour had arrived. The Earl then at once gave orders to Fortescue, his gentleman usher, to send away all his servants on different errands the next day, so that the coast might be clear, and his orders were obeyed by all except William Powell, the cook, and Jenkins Crisp, the groom, who "did say and report that there was good-will between the Earl and Lady Katherine,"

* Examination of the Earl and Countess of Hertford, Harl. MSS. 249.

† Ibid.

and who may well be supposed to have been neither blind, deaf, nor specially dull of comprehension at this particular time.

Early in the morning, the Queen and her train departed to Eltham, to spend the day in hunting, and, about an hour after, Katherine and Jane stole down the steps of Whitehall Palace, and unaccompanied by a single attendant, they walked along the shore of the river, the tide being out, and, without meeting a single person, soon arrived at the water-gate of the Earl's house in Cannon Row. They then ascended the steps, and passing the kitchen window where the cook and the groom were slily peeping, they entered a back door, and were received by the Earl in his private apartment.

No preparations had been made for the wedding, secrecy being the great object; and so agitated were the bride and bridegroom, that they both solemnly swore afterwards, that they were unable to remember what dress either wore on that eventful day. They could not speak, but waited silently in each other's presence, while Lady Jane went to fetch the priest whom she had undertaken to provide.* She soon returned, bringing with her "a fair-complexioned man with an auburn beard, of a meane stature, dressed in a long gowne faced with budge, the collar thereof turned

down,"—a Lutheran priest, probably a refugee from the Netherlands. He was unknown both to the Earl and Katherine, Jane having arranged the ceremony with him beforehand. He then performed the marriage ceremony according to the service of the Common Prayer-book.

Did not the whole subsequent conduct of the Earl utterly refute such a suspicion, it might almost be supposed that he wished to render the marriage uncertain.

But the real truth is that the perfect confidence and honour of both parties were so fixed and romantic that they forgot the importance of other circumstances which the law requires, and which can seriously affect the rights of others. There was no one to give away the bride, the only witness to the marriage ceremony was Lady Jane; and not only were the priest's name and address unknown to both the Earl and Katherine, but they forgot to notice his countenance sufficiently to be able to recognise him again. It was the Lady Jane who brought him, gave him ten pounds for performing the ceremony, led him away, and reserving this mystery to herself, dismissed him without the knowledge of the Earl.

After the wedding, Lady Jane took upon herself the office of sewer and cup-bearer, and offered "Confects and other Banquetting meats

and Beere and Wyne upon the Cup-boarde;" but Katherine, now Countess of Hertford, "drank none, neither saw any person that brought any."* The Earl then took his wife and sister to the water-gate, and kissing Katherine, he bade her farewell for a short time; and putting them into a boat, he watched them glide down the river to Whitehall, where they regained the palace and mingled with the company as if nothing had happened, while the Earl remained in his lonely house by the river in Cannon Row.

Such was the marriage of Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, son of the Protector Somerset, and Katherine, sister of Lady Jane Grey—a story that might well pass for a fiction, a romance of the historian, did not the records remain of every fact above related, as solemnly sworn to before the High Court of Commission of Queen Elizabeth.

Yet if ever there was a marriage, in the noblest and best sense of the word, it was surely this. Among the lowliest peasants or the serenest philosophers, we may equally seek in vain for a more perfect example of a love, that fully admitting and honouring the moral and religious law, rated at their due insignificance

* Harl. MSS. 249.

every other circumstance which could meddle with the all-paramount claims of mutual affection. The noise and parade, that on ever so small a scale are considered a necessity, and which too often cheat the dues of love to feed the appetite of vanity, were so ignored by a princess and an earl, that they did not even know what dress they were married in, and the very error they committed in the absence of witnesses, while no virtue in itself, yet bears witness to the virtue of mutual trust and disinterestedness.

If Katherine had been guilty of any of the ambitious designs imputed to her, she would never have married Hertford. People who use marriage only as a stepping-stone in political ambition, are not deterred by any amount of imbecility or uncongeniality in the object proposed. The same person, viz., Sir Thomas Chaloner, the English ambassador to the Netherlands, who reports that "it was thought she (Katherine) could be enticed away, if some trusty body spoke with her," says in the same letter that the council of King Philip "thought how he might both *geg* the French King, and also brave a title to the Crown of England by the conveying out of the realm the Lady Katherine, who is supposed to be the next heir

to the realm, and marry her to the Prince his son."*

The extravagances of Don Carlos would have been no barrier in the eyes of an ambitious woman, who, by a union with him, would not only crown herself with the proudest diadem on earth, which Spain could certainly boast in those days of long-departed glory, but would be able to put the weight of Spain in the balance for her claim to the far inferior sceptre of England after the death of Elizabeth. Yet we find no evidence of her intriguing for this or any other foreign marriage, or taking any step that could promote her ambition in any way. She remained a Protestant, true to the traditions of the house of Suffolk; and as to the assertion that intelligence received by Cecil caused her to be "too closely watched for the future to permit her evasion,"† not one word or action has yet been cited to show that she intended or wished an evasion or escape. That other parties formed plots with the intention of using her as tool for their own ends, is no proof that she would have consented to be the tool, and how she was regarded by Sir Thomas Chaloner may be seen from another passage in the letter above quoted:—"The

* The Austrian Archduke was also spoken of as fit consort.

† Froude's "History of England," viii.

writer does not know whether the Lady Katherine or any of the parties before rehearsed are privy to these practises, or whether they are only thought meetest by some on this side."*

During the time of these supposed plots, Katherine, as we have seen, was secretly betrothed to Hertford, and her faith to him during the whole of her life is too strong a fact to be altered by the tattle of a Spaniard, or even the reports (pretending to be nothing else) picked up in a foreign country by an English ambassador.

Nor can the sincerity of Hertford's devotion be attainted. The old friendship of the Queen for his father had been extended to him, and one of the first acts of Elizabeth on coming to the throne had been to restore him to most of the lost honours of Somerset. By marrying a royal princess, and a hated, however innocent, rival of Elizabeth, he knew perfectly well that he should forfeit the Queen's favour, for the hopes that had inspired him at the beginning of her reign had long vanished as he witnessed the treatment which Katherine received at Court. That he had no ambitious designs in his marriage is proved by the fact of his want of caution in procuring witnesses and a duly certificated and produci-

* See Appendix II. c.

ble priest. If he had thought of the possible future queen, and not of the woman, the first things he would have secured would have been the unchallengeable validity of the marriage, and the claims of any children he might have to the English crown under the will of Henry VIII.—claims which, as Elizabeth had already declared her intention of never marrying, were of the highest importance to his worldly advantage.

But, as we have seen, neither party thought of these things. With the inexperience and faith of youth, they were unprepared for disbelief and sneers at what they both solemnly swore to be true, and maintained to the end of their lives; and though they anticipated the Queen's anger should their marriage be discovered, they could not foresee the whole of the calamities that awaited them.

The first of these calamities was the death of the only witness of the marriage, the devoted Jane. By some rapid illness, the cause of which is not mentioned, she was carried off in the nineteenth year of her age, to the bitter grief of Katherine and Hertford. As one of the maids of honour, and a favourite of the Queen, she was ordered a splendid funeral. Her body was brought from the Queen's Almonry to Westminster Abbey, followed by sixty mourners and

two hundred of the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, including members of the Privy Council. A large banner of arms was borne, the Clarencieux herald attending, and the Bishop of Peterborough preached a funeral sermon, in which he warmly eulogized the virtues of Jane. She was buried in the same chapel with the Duchess Frances, the mother of her friend Katherine.

The spectator who wanders among the neglected and decaying tombs of Westminster Abbey, may—if allowed to remain long enough by the greedy vergers, in whose hands, and for whose pecuniary profit, rest the old historic tombs of our illustrious dead—read the following inscription:—

The Noble Lady JANE SEYMOVR, davghter to the renowned Prince Edward, Dvke of Somerset, Earle of Hertforde, Viscovnte Beavchampe, and Baron Seymovr, and to the right noble Lady Anne, Duchesse of Somerset, his wyfe; departed this lyfe in her virginitie at ye age of XIX yeares the XIX daie of Marche A° M.CCCCCLX. in the seconde yeare of the moste happie raigne of Qveene Elizabeth, and was honorablie bvryed in the floore of this Chappell. To whose memorie, Edward Earle of Hertforde and Baron Beavchampe, her deare brother, hathe cavsed this monvment to be made.

Camden says that the following verses were also at one time inscribed on her monument:—

Ingenio præstans & vultu Jana decoro,
Nobilis arte fuit vocis, & arte manus.
Hanc Venus & Pallas certant utra debet habere,
Vult Venus esse suam, Pallas esse suam;

Mors fera virginis figens in pectore telum,
Neutrius (inquit) erit, sed mihi præda iacet.
Corpore Jana iacet tellurem terra subibit,
Sed pius in cœli spiritus arce sedet.

Which have been thus translated:—

On the Death of Lady Jane, by Dr. Haddon.

For genius famed, for beauty loved,
Jane bade the world admire;
Her voice harmonious notes improved,
Her hand the tuneful lyre.
Venus and Pallas claimed this maid,
Each as her right alone,
But Death superior power displayed,
And seized her as his own.
Her virgin dust this mournful Tomb
In kindred earth contains;
Her soul, which Fate can ne'er consume,
In endless glory reigns.

The necessity of keeping their marriage secret had, of course, placed the Earl and Katherine in a false position. Their interviews were as much stolen and attended with more danger than in the days of their courtship, and were managed by Lady Jane, or a servant of Katherine named Leigh, who, of her own accord, "when she saw my Lord and Lady whisper together, would withdraw herself out of sight and leave them alone." Before the death of Jane, the faithful servant had left her mistress, and, by the death of her friend, Katherine and Hertford were left without any messenger whom they could trust. The Earl was not his own master, although of age.

His mother still claimed his obedience, and, ignorant of his secret, was irritated that he would not settle himself to marry. The Queen, who sometimes forced her advice on the young men of her Court in a practical manner that they could not dispute, saw that he was unsettled and strange in his ways, and decided that to travel abroad would be good for him. As this was no secret, it soon came to Katherine's ears, but the Earl, unwilling to grieve her, denied it, "as he would in no wise be acknowen unto her of it, saying that she might be sure he should get noe leave though he were so minded."

The following curious letter from his mother, the Duchess Anne, shows his position in the eyes of others at this critical period, and when we remember that it is written in the Duchess's own hand, on the very day of the death of her daughter Jane, we can still comprehend why the Earl and Katherine kept their secret, and how, notwithstanding the "motherly love" of the Duchess, she was no woman on whose bosom the young or the erring would repose their griefs and perplexities :—

*Anne, Duchess of Somerset, to Sir William Cecil.**

"Good Mr. Secretary,—First I beseech you

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xvi. fol. 52, MS.

do my most bounden duty of thanks to the queen's highness for this gracious favour to have any respect to my liking of my son's journey. And next, I pray you say that I like this journey so far forth as it best liketh her highness; thirdly, as you Mr. Secretary think good to persuade the going or tarrying, even so shall I be best content. Motherly love wisheth him here at home matched in some noble house to the Queen's Majesty's liking and his own contentation, serving his country to his friends' content. Again his vain life, hitherto tending rather to the contrary, bids me prove if experience of travel and sight of foreign countries will shake off these youthful errors. Then forth comes so many dangers to my head, together with the remembrance of his small body to bear travel and sickness, that I know not what to say. And yet to continue here the life he hath led should prove too much to my discomfort. I call to mind many whose travel hath Increased their estimation; others again have consumed their substance, spent their time and lost credit. Thus do I see for the most part as travel is a gain to the better disposed, even so proves it fruitless to the contrary sort. Sir, though I as a mother do wish the best to my child, yet do I yield and consent to that which Mr. Secretary thinks meet

for my son to follow. I pray you take this one thing of me among my motherly passions, that as the queen's highness's pleasure is to stay or let him go, even so am I best content. If it be indifferent to her Majesty, then, good master Secretary, make answer on my behalf as to your wisdom shall seem good. I know you wish his good, and know what is better for him than either I or himself. And I am so sorry that his demeanour is such towards you as that he drives you to strain curtly to say your flat mind which is the better to stay or go. I had rather he willed to have dealt that your letter to me might have been lengthened with a flat persuasion of either going or tarrying. Good Mr. Secretary, I have lost one that had been abroad and was coming homeward. And for that this stands now upon making and marring, bear with me, though I be the more earnest to crave your faithful friendly counsel towards him. Good Mr. Secretary, deal not curtly with him, though he be somewhat wilful and unruly, yet spare not to overrule him. And again, if in meaning the best, his stay should be by any occasion of mine, and afterward danger should ensue thereby, then should my grief be doubled. Thus remain I perplexed at my wit's end what to write or what to say. Saving that I end as I began, to do that

which may best satisfy the queen's majesty, and then do give Mr. Secretary full commission to answer what please him on my behalf. And sure I am there cannot but good come of it whether it be in going or tarrying. If the contrary should happen at all, resting in God's hands, yet doubt I not, but I interpret Mr. Secretary's doing to proceed of a most faithful and earnest friend. And so resting in prayer for the Queen's Majesty, I leave you to God, who send you and my Lady Cecil the comfort your own hearts can best desire, wishing it lay in me to show some part of will and meaning I have to requite the trouble and care ye have had and must have with me and mine.

"Yours assured to my power ever,

"ANNE SOMERSET."

The Queen decided on the departure of Hertford; and knowing how soon he should have to brave her displeasure, he perhaps thought to soften it by showing prompt obedience now. Only by revealing the truth could he defer his departure; and he possibly hoped, as mortals do hope, without reason, for some lucky accident between the present and the inevitable future moment. Katherine by chance saw the passport signed for his journey to Paris; but, though

overwhelmed with grief, they both esteemed it best to keep the secret as long as possible.* The Earl then drew a deed on parchment, settling 1000*l.* a year on Katherine in case of his death, and then departed; and Katherine was left alone to bear the swiftly-approaching revelation.

Soon the cruel whispers, and scornful glances, and contemptuous behaviour of the Court informed the poor young Countess that her reputation was at stake, and the fatal hour was come.

The first person to whom she turned in her distress was Bess of Hardwick, then a Court lady, high in favour with the Queen, as Lady Saintlow.† Bess well knew the danger of such confidence. She burst into tears, not of sympathy but fear, declaring to the trembling Katherine her sorrow that she had married without the consent or knowledge of the Queen or any other of her friends, and gave her no hope. Katherine, frantic with terror, though it was late at night, next hurried to the apartments of Lord Robert Dudley, and besought his intercession. It is not likely that he denied it, as he was not cruel to any whose requests did not interfere with himself.

* Personal Answers of Lady Katherine Hertford, Harl. MSS. 249.

† Sir William Saintlow having been imprisoned by Queen Mary at the conspiracy of Wyatt, he was, like the rest of that party, in high favour with Queen Elizabeth.

But Dudley himself could have done nothing to soften the rage of the Queen, whose worst qualities came out on the discovery of a stolen marriage. Not the most ardent admirer of her splendid qualities, her undaunted courage, her pride in the renown of her country, the dignity with which she upheld her great name in the eyes of foreign nations, and the power with which she sacrificed her private feelings to lift England high above the rank in which she found it, can regard the conduct of Queen Elizabeth to Katherine Hertford with any other feeling than that of shame and indignation.

In a transport of fury she hurried Katherine to the Tower, that must have frowned in tenfold horror upon the wretched prisoner, who, in a state of health demanding the utmost tenderness and gentleness, was compelled to pass through the Traitors' Gate and by the very spot where her sister had been condemned to a bloody death. Bess, too, though certainly quite innocent, was included in the Queen's wrath, and, on suspicion of being an accomplice, was compelled to take up her residence for a time in the same gloomy abode. The following warrant will recall the story of Lady Margaret Douglas and Lord Thomas Howard, and has quite an hereditary sound in it:—

From the Quene's Majestie to Mr. Warner, Lieutenant of the Tower, 17th August, 1560.*

"Trusty and wellbeloved, we grete you well. Our pleasure is, that ye shall, as by our Commandment, examyn the Lady *Catharyne* very streightly, how many hath bene pryvee to the Love betwixt the Erle of *Hertford* and hir from the begynning; and lett hir certenly understand that she shall have no Manner of Favor, except she will shew the truth, not only what Ladyes or Gentillwomen of this Court wer therto privee, but also what Lords and Gentillmen: For it doth now appere that sondry Personagees have delt herein; and when it shall appeare more manifestly, it shall increase our Indignation ageynst hir, if she will forbeare to utter.

"We ernestly requyre you to bestow your Diligence in this. Ye also shall send to Alderman Lodg secretly for *Sentlow,* and shall put hir in aw of divers Matters confessed by the Lady Catharyn; and so also deale with hir, that she may confess to you all hir Knowledg in the same Matters. It is certayne that there hath bene great Practisees and Purposees; and sence the Death of the Lady *Jane,* she hath been most privee. And as ye shall see Occasion so ye may

* Haynes, Burghley Papers, p. 369.

keep *Sentlow* two or three nights more ore less, and let hir be retorned to Lodgee's or kept still with you, as ye shall think mete. We have signed a Licence for your absence, but we would that ye should forbeare for a fortnight, and not to depart untill also our Pleasure be furder signified."

The result of this order is best given in the words of Sir Edward Warner himself, and to his letter may be appended one written on the same day by the Duchess Anne, whose true character as a mother now fully appears:—

Sir Edward Warner to the Queen Elizabeth.

"Pleaseth it your most excellent Majesty. Upon the Receipt of your letters, I have according to the tenor thereof travailed both with the Lady Katherine and mistress Saintlow, using all the ways and means I could devise to bolt out and bring to light the practises and secret dealing which hath been used in the love between the earl of Hertford and the said lady Katherine. But they do both most earnestly allege and avow that they have in all things concerning the same justly and truly confessed to such as it pleased

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xix., fol. 32, MS.

your highness to send unto them before this, and there is no question that I have asked of the Lady Katherine but she sayeth the same hath been demanded of her before, and she hath answered even according to the very truth. Divers of which answers hath to me seemed so unlikely that I have greatly charged her therewith, and by all ways and means I could, persuaded her to be more plaine with your highness. Nevertheless she standeth fast that all that she hath said is true, and also that she hath said all the truth, and seeing there is no more to be gotten of her, I have taken that as it is and put it in writing in as good order and so I could bear it which spending much time with her the rather to see if anything would fall out, unadvisedly most humbly beseeching your majesty to take my doing herein in good part and likewise I crave your pardon that I trouble you with scribbling a fyt, but I can do it no better myself and I was loth to trust any other person with me herein. For, also, much as it pleased your majesty to write unto me that you had signed a license for me to be absent for a season, I am so bold to request the possession thereof and your favour to enjoy also the benefit thereof. So praying the Holy Ghost to prosper all your godly purposes and give you long life to reign

over us, from your tower of London the 22nd of August, 1561.

"Your most humble servant and
"Obedient subject,
"EDWARD WARNER."

*Anne, Duchess of Somerset, to Sir William Cecil.**

"GOOD MASTER SECRETARY,—Hearing a great bruit that my lady Katherine Gray is in the tower, and also that she should say she is married already to my son, I could not choose but trouble you with my cares and sorrows thereof. And although I might, upon my son's earnest and often protesting unto me the contrary, desire you to be an humble suitor on my behalf, her tales might not be credited before my son did answer, yet instead thereof my first and chief suit is that the queen's majesty will think and judge of me in this matter according to my desert and meaning. And if my son have so much forgotten her highness calling him to honour, and so much overshot his bounden duty, and so far abused her Majesty's benignity, yet never was his mother privy or consenting thereunto. I will not fill my letter how much I have schooled and persuaded

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xix., fol. 31, MS.

him to the contrary, nor yet will desire that youth and fear may help excuse or lessen his fault. But only that her highness will have that opinion of me as of one that *neither for child nor friend* shall willingly neglect the duty of a faithful subject. And to conserve my credit with her Majesty, good Master Secretary, stand now my friend, that the wildness of mine unruly child do not minish her Majesty's favour towards me. And thus so perplexed with this discomfortable rumour, I end, not knowing how to proceed nor what to do therein. And therefore, good Master Secretary, let me understand some comfort of my grief from the Queen's Majesty and some counsel from yourself. And so do leave you to God.

"Your assured friend to my power,

"ANNE SOMERSET."

Meanwhile, an order was despatched to Paris to the Earl, commanding his instant return. He made not the slightest attempt to escape or shirk his share of the consequences, but at once recrossed the Channel, and, hastening to the Court, boldly declared that all that Katherine had confessed was true, and that he was her husband. This announcement was followed by his immediate incarceration in the Tower, in a

separate prison from his unfortunate wife; and, two days afterwards (Sept. 7th), he was formally examined by a committee appointed by the Queen, and on the 12th of September Lady Katherine was examined in like manner. Though examined apart, the answers of the prisoners agreed. They separately related the above circumstances of their marriage, which they solemnly swore to be true. Since their separation, they had corresponded whenever an opportunity occurred of sending a letter, and though they had not placed each other's names in the superscription for fear of discovery, they had addressed the letters: Hertford, "To my Wife," and Katherine, "To my Husband," or "To my loving Husband."

The examination was scarcely over when, on the 21st of September, Lady Katherine gave birth to a son in the Tower. He was baptized by the name of Edward, as the son of the Earl, and is known as the Lord Beauchamp, which was the title given to the eldest son of the house of Hertford.

This new claimant to the rights of his house rendered the question still more serious, and a new examination was instituted, the following warrant being sent to Sir Edward Warner:—

*To Sir Edward Warner, Knight, Lieutenant of the Tower. By the Quene.**

"Trustie and welbeloved, we grete you well. When the most reverend Father in God the Archbishop of *Canterburye*, with others, have Comission to examyn, inquire, and judge of the infamose Conversacion and pretended Mariage betwixt the Ladye Katheryn Grey and the Erle of Hertford: Our Pleasure is that, when the said Archbishop, with other the Commissioners, shall send to have either of the Parties to appere before them in that Cause, ye shall your self lede either of them by Water as Prisoners in your custodie to Lambeth: And when they have answered in Place of Judgment to remayn under your custodie as Prisoners, and to returne them in lyke manner to their Places. And if the Commissioners shall at any Tyme send or come to examyn them, ye shall permit them so to do; for our Will is to have Justice. Geven under our Signett at our Pallaice of Westminster the 10th Daye of Februarye, the fourth Yere of our Reigne."

The Queen seems to have altered her mind, for, instead of the examinations taking place at

* Haynes, Burghley Papers, p. 378.

Lambeth, they were all conducted in the Tower, before Grindal, Bishop of London, and several commissioners. The result of the evidence was substantially the same, but now came the consequences of the strange ignorance of the prisoners of the importance of some minor matters. The only witness to the marriage, the Lady Jane, was dead, and the clergyman who married them could not be found.

The commissioners, therefore, declared that there had been no marriage, and that consequently the son was illegitimate. Still, even in this case, the prisoners had broken no law, but, nevertheless, they were both detained in the Tower.

Low murmurs at this act of injustice were heard among the people, who did not scruple to express their disgust at the conduct of Archbishop Parker, who was believed to be the chief agent in their condemnation. The Earl and Countess refused to acknowledge the decision that placed a legal separation between them, and rendered illegitimate their only son, the heir of two illustrious houses, and a lineal descendant of King Henry VII.

Everywhere, except among the royal sycophants, they were spoken of as husband and wife, and Katherine was called "My Lady

Hertford." Their gaolers, too, were evidently among their sympathizers, and neglected that part of the Queen's commandment which ordered them to be kept in separate prisons.

On the 10th of February, 1563, a second son was born, and baptized by the name of Thomas, as the legitimate son of the Earl and Katherine.

The fury of the Queen was redoubled, and she resolved that those whom God had joined, the Star Chamber should put asunder. The Earl was cited before that scandalous tribunal and fined fifteen thousand pounds, and both he and Lady Katherine were condemned to remain in prison during the Queen's pleasure.

Katherine never saw her husband again. The Queen, with a mockery of kindness, had her prison fitted up in a manner befitting a princess of the blood royal, and a profusion of fine attire was stored in her wardrobe.* Monkeys and dogs were allowed her for *amusement*—in fact, any amount of worthless finery and toys, while, perhaps, never existed a woman in whose eyes all these things had less value.

The Earl was placed in another part of the Tower, and from henceforth the dread of the Queen overruled any pitiful inclinations on the

* See Appendix II. c.

part of the gaolers to allow him to visit his wife, and, as he pathetically expressed it, to "comfort her in her sadness."

A few months after the last sentence, the plague broke out, and, like all epidemics, was especially fatal in the neighbourhood of the always unhealthy State prison. The friends of the prisoners interceded, and Elizabeth, who was always keenly alive to the popular voice, knew well the light in which her proceedings were regarded. She dared not add to the severity already shown, by leaving her victims to die of the plague, and issued orders for their temporary removal—Katherine, to the charge of her uncle, Sir John Grey, one of the favourites of Elizabeth, as being imprisoned at the time of the Wyatt conspiracy, and the Earl to the house of his mother.*

The accompanying warrant from the Lords of the Council bears witness to the kindly spirit with which the young couple were regarded by the nation at large, and which was in all probability the cause of the indulgence shown in the treatment of the prisoners. Their separation was their real punishment, as Elizabeth well knew; and having secured this, she was willing to hide her cruelty with minor ameliorations.

* Letter of Cecil to Sir Thomas Smith.

*The Lords of the Council to the Lord John Grey.**

"After our harty Commendations to your good Lordships. Although it may seme strange unto you that without any former Knowledg gyven you, the Lady *Catharn* your Lordships Nepce, is appoynted to be removed out of the Tower to your Hous; yet we dout not but ye will thynk the Cause reasonable, when ye shall understand it to be thus. The Quene's Majesty having Consideration that the Towre of London is envyroned with infection of the Plage, for the Danger that might ensue to your Nece ther, hath bene pleased of hir Compassion to grant that she shuld be removed from thence, as uppon much humble Suyte hir Majesty hath granted the like to the Erle of *Hertford;* and meaning not that she shuld be at any other Liberty, but to be free from that Place of Danger, thought best, in respect your Lordship is a Nobleman, and of grave Consideration to regard any Trust committed to you by hir Majesty, to committ the Custody of the said Lady to you hir onely Uncle and next Coosyn. And thus hir Majesty willed us to shew you the Occasion of her sending to you, and hath com-

* Haynes, Burghley Papers, p. 404.

manded us also to wryte furder unto your Lordship, that hir Pleasure is, the said Lady shall remayn with you and your Wiffe, as in Custody, not to depart from you untill hir Majesty's Pleasure shall be furder knowen, nether to have any Conference with any Person being not of your Houshold, without Knowledg of your Lord or your Wiffe. Which hir Majesty meaneth she shuld understand of your Lordship, and observe, as some part of hir Punishment; and therin hir Majesty meaneth herin to trye hir Disposition how she will obey that which she shall have in Commandment. And suerly of our owne Parts, for that we wish she should not long lack hir Majesty's Favor, but recover it by all good Meanes, we hartely pray your Lordship to have regard, that she use hir self there in your Houss with no other Demeanor than as though she were in the Towre, untill she may atteyne more Favor of hir Majesty. For we must lett you know that which is trew, hir Majesty hath at this present ment no more by this Liberty, but that she be out of the Towre from Danger of the Plage. And so we pray your Lordship lett hir playnly understand."

This is followed by the Queen's warrant for their removal:—

*The Queen to the Lieutenant of the Tower.**

"Trusty and wellbeloved: We greet you well. Wheras we be informed that the places near that our tower are much vilified with the plague, and yourself not without great fear that the same may enter into our tower, we are contented the Lady Catharyne and the Earl of Hertford, for the time of this danger of the plague, shall be in some other several convenient places out of the tower. Wherefore we will that the Lady Catharyne shall be removed to the house of the Lord John Grey in Essex, there to remain with him and his wife during our pleasure. And the Earl of Hertford to be removed to his mother's house in Middlesex, there also to remain during our pleasure. And for their behaviour, our pleasure is that ye shall command them in our name, under pain of our indignation and such fine as we shall please to pass, that neither of them depart from the said places otherwise than to take the air near to the same, and not without our leave neither attempt to have any converse together."

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xxiv., fol. 62, MS.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STORY OF KATHERINE GREY.

(Continued.)

DIRGO, the residence of Lord John Grey, was situated in the Manor of Havering at Bower, in Essex, and had once been a royal residence. There, on the 9th of July, 1437, had died Joan the widow of Henry IV., and on the 24th of April, 1559, Queen Elizabeth had granted it to her devoted follower Lord John Grey, brother of the Duke of Suffolk.*

Though Lord John Grey declared Katherine deserving of her punishment, he still wrote letters to Cecil begging him to intercede with the Queen, and Katherine herself poured forth piteous prayers that she might be allowed to see her "dear Lord and Husband," for neither Hertford nor Katherine ever admitted the shadow of a doubt as to their true marriage, and she invari-

* Letter of Lord John Grey. Ellis, Second Series, ii.

ably signed herself "Katherine Hertford." To write directly to the Queen was hopeless; the suppliants therefore took the cautious plan of appealing to Cecil, who was to ask Lord Robert Dudley to plead with the Queen. But Elizabeth was deaf to her prayers, and the sickness of hope deferred, and the agony of her separation from Hertford, soon began to tell on the health of Lady Katherine. She lost all appetite for food, and sat brooding over her miseries, incapable of consolation. Sometimes her uncle would say to her, with the honest idea of a kind-hearted but not sensitive soul, "Good madame, eate somewhat to compfort yourself." At his kindly voice she would burst into tears, and retire to her chamber; and when Sir John, unable to comprehend such keen sorrow in one who had all the material comforts of life around her, asked her "what was the cause of her using herself in such manner?" she would answer, "Alas, uncle, what is life to me? But for my lord and my children, I would to God I were buried!"

Among many letters from her uncle to Cecil, beseeching him to do his best to "ease her of this woeful greiffe," the following may be selected as giving a heartrending picture of distracted sorrow:—

*Lord John Grey to Sir William Cecil.**

"The augmenting of my niece's grief in the want of the Queen's Majesty's favour, enforceth me (besides my duty in nature) every way to declare and recommend unto you her miserable and most woeful state; this three or four days she hath for the most part kept her bed, but altogether her chamber, in such wise as I thought once I should have been driven to have sent for some of the Queen's Physicians, and I never came to her but I found her either weeping or else saw by her face she had wept. Wherefore Cousin Cecil, for the mutual love which ought to be betwixt Christian men, and for the love wherewith God hath loved us, being his, procure by some way or means, the Queen's Majesties farther favour towards her; for assuredly she never went to bed all this time of her sickness, but they that watched with her much doubted how to find her in the morning, for she is fraughted with phlegm by reason of thought, weeping and sitting still, that many times she is like to be overcome therewith: so as if she had not painful† women about her, I tell you truly, Cousin Cecil, I could not sleep in quiet. Thus with my hearty commendations to you and my

* Ellis's Letters, Second Series, ii. p. 282.

† Careful.

good lady my cousin, I wish you the same quiet of mind as to myself.—From my house at Pirgo, the 12th of December, 1563.

"By your loving Cousin

"And assured friend to his power,

"JOHN GREY.

"To my very loving Cousin, Sir William Cecil, Knight, Chief Secretary to the Queen's Majesty."

At the same time, Hertford repeatedly addressed Lord Robert to move the Queen to compassion, accompanying his letters with presents, which her Majesty had the meanness to accept, while she turned a deaf ear to his suit. The accompanying letters will serve as a specimen of the correspondence of Hertford and Dudley, kindly received at first by Dudley, but of which he afterwards grew rather tired, especially as the cause seemed to become hopeless:—

*The Earl of Hertford to Lord Robert Dudley.**

"MY GOOD LORD,—Among divers my bonds, I think myself not a little bound unto your Lordship for the friendly welcoming and honorable using my lady my mother, since her now being at the Court, as also your well-tried and godly noble furthering her long and troublesome suit

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xxxiii. fol. 27, MS.

for us to our most gracious Queen. Wherein, as always, so now I still crave your especial and most humble means of desire to her Majesty we may be unburdened of her Highness' intolerable displeasure, the great weight whereof hath sufficiently taught us never again to offend so merciful a Princess. And so I beseech you, my good Lord, now on our behalf, who pray for no earthly thing so much as the comfort of her too long-wanted favour. My trust is God will bless your Lordship's travails with the fruit thereof, and by your means (wherein next him we only depend) turn the sorrowful mourning of us, her Majesty's poor captives, into a contentive comfort. For which I rest in continual prayer. And so take my leave, beseeching Almighty God long to preserve her and make me so happy as to enjoy the company of so dear a Lord and friend as I have and do find of your Lordship.

"From Hanworth, the 18th of March, 1683.

"Your Lordship's most assured friend, to command,

"HERTFORD.

"Sent by Thugans."

*Lord Robert Dudley to the Earl of Hertford.**

"MY LORD,—According to your request, I

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xxxiii. fol. 28, MS.

moved the Queen's Majesty, at my coming to the Court, for your further liberty. I declared withal unto her highness the hap I had to meet with you. And in what humble sort your Lordship did both to acknowledge that which was past, and how desirous you were to have any the least occasion in this world to shew your obedient and willing heart in doing such service toward her Majesty as might make some satisfaction for the displeasure you had incurred, which was so heavy and intolerable to you, as without hope of recovery of her favour again, you desired not to live. My declaration on your Lordship's behalf was not misliked, and having occasion to speak of her again when Mr. Secretary was there by Sunday night, who most friendly did further your suit. And when I also prest her somewhat for a comfortable answer for you, I found yet that she wanted stay in granting it, I would have been glad to have none for your Lordship. My Lady, your mother, likewise hath presented for her part the matter so earnestly and diligently as was possible, but as yet the time has not come. Your Lordship can consider princes must be obeyed and their wills fulfilled; if God have not yet stirred her heart hereat, nothing will work till he be pleased, as much as we may do with speech and humble heart hath been, I assure

your Lordship, for you. Love him and fear him and pray earnestly to him, for he must be your chief work, and as oft as occasion and time shall serve, I shall not omit anything that may further your help to obtain the favour and comfort you seek. In the meantime, I will wish your Lordship patience, and not leave as opportunity shall yield to remember her Majesty of your heavy and grievous date. Thus I commend your Lordship to God's grace.

"In haste, this morning, 22nd March.

"Your Lordship's very friend,

"R. DUDLEY."

*The Earl of Hertford to Lord Robert Dudley.**

"MY GOOD LORD,—Like as I cannot too often acknowledge the great bonds I owe your Lordship, for divers your Lordship's favours and friendships shewed, so can I not, having this good opportunity of writing by Mr. Thugans, let him pass without desire of carrying these few Lines unto your Lordship. Before whom I am bold to say the same and continued intolerable grief for our most gracious Queen's displeasure, I did at the last my most happy seeing and speaking with your Lordship. May it therefore now please you to reiterate the same unto so merciful,

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xxxiii. fol. 37, MS.

pitiful a nature as her highness's to all sorts is well known, and if most grievous offenders tasted it, we by so favorable a means as your Lordship receiving the comfort of her Majesty's ended displeasure, may for ever, as we are most bounden, acknowledge the same toward her highness and your Lordship, whom I beseech to make my most loving and hearty commendations to my Lord your brother, praying Almighty God to prosper her Majesty with continual felicity, and to send you both your heart's desire.—From Hanworth the 29th March.

"Your Lordship's bounden friend and servant,

"E. HERTFORD.

"I am bold to beseech your Lordship to do me the honour to present on my behalf this poor token of gloves, I told your Lordship I thought myself most happy, I might make for her Majesty, desiring likewise (if it may please you to do me so much favour) to send me word of her liking or finding fault with the same, that I may amend it in the next."

*Lord Robert Dudley to the Earl of Hertford.**

"MY LORD,—I have delivered your handy-work my own self where you required me. There

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xxxiii. fol. 37, MS.

is no fault to be found with these, for they be perfect in their kind. Yet if in the next you make the same a little stronger, as I have shewed to Thugans, I think it be all the lack that may be supplied to the want in these. For your Lordship's greater matter, I will not fail to use the benefit of this good time, neither shall you lack whatsoever I may say for the furtherment thereof. In the mean time, let the clemency of her Majesty, shewed to many, work the good hope in you that God will frame her favorable mind, knowing your faithful meaning to be for ever in all respects such as will seek to offer all dutiful recompense for the recovery of that is so necessary to be desired, of which, partly towards both, I said as time would permit me at my meeting late your Lordship in the way, and my poor fancy which proceeded of right good will, and shall so in the desire to do your Lordship that good I may be able. I do also bear well away that in yourself of yourself, which I have not let to declare as I thought to such as I judge it will not harm you. I cannot better advise you, my Lord, than to think still as you said then, and to think it no more now than you shall fully determine to fulfil hereafter, when it shall please God to send you that liberty

you desire, and her favour I am sure you trust for. And no friend you have shall wish you sooner to enjoy it than myself, and will not forbear alway to put you in mind of that I think meet, plainly as I think. And yet I think as well of you as your Lordship's self would I should.

"Thus an end in haste,

"Your Lordship's very friend,

"R. DUDLEY."

At this period all chance of mollifying the Queen was destroyed by the injudicious interference of a well-wisher of Katherine. This was John Hales, a lawyer, who had been Clerk of the Hanaper under Henry VIII. and Edward VI. He had been exiled in the time of Queen Mary, on account of his religion, and he returned on the accession of Elizabeth. He was not only a Protestant, but a zealous Puritan; and that he was a staunch supporter of the claims of Lady Katherine to be considered heiress to the crown, is one of the strongest proofs of her attachment to the Protestant religion. During the illness of Queen Elizabeth in 1562, he had composed a book on the Succession, in which he had maintained the title of Katherine as successor, and

vindicated her lawful marriage to the Earl of Hertford. Not satisfied with his own opinion alone, he procured that of councillors and lawyers from abroad, to confirm his arguments, and books were written on the marriage by Johannes Oldendorf, LL.D., by Jacobus Ormphelius, by three doctors of the Imperial Chamber of Spires, and five doctors of the University of Paris.* All his arguments he laid before the most potent nobles; and to such discussion did the affair give rise, that it went by the name of the Halesian tempest. The Queen became so alarmed and jealous as even to suspect the well-beloved and trusty Cecil. John Hales was committed to the Fleet for his boldness in discussing the sacred question of the Succession and criticising the judgment on Lady Katherine's marriage, but "more specially because he communicated it to sundry persons."† Among these "sundry persons" was the Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon, who, for no other offence than saying that he would present a petition to the Queen against the judgment on Hertford's marriage, was commanded to absent himself from

* These works are all among the MSS. of the University of Cambridge.

† Letter of Cecil to Sir Thomas Smith; Ellis, Second Series, ii. p. 285.

Court and meddle with nothing but his affairs of Chancery. Lord John Grey, too, came under the royal frown; and such was the state of the royal mind, that to be a friend of Katherine was to be a dangerous and obnoxious person.

At this critical period, anxiety and gout carried off Lord John Grey, and his unhappy niece was temporarily given in charge to Mr. Petre, a colleague of Cecil, and shortly afterwards, "the Queen's displeasure continuing still towards my Lord Hertford and my Lady Katherine,"* they were both transferred to the Tower.

The former Lieutenant, Sir Edward Warner, was discharged for too great leniency and neglect, and was now replaced by Sir Owen Hopton, who was strictly charged to relax nothing in favour of his prisoners.

The miserable condition of her son had at last subdued the selfish fears of his mother, and in the fourth year of his captivity we find her writing thus to Cecil:—

Anne, Duchess of Somerset, to Sir William Cecil.†

"Good Master Secretary, after this long silence, and for that as yet mine old occasion lets mine attendance, I have presumed by letter to renew

* Letter of Cecil to Sir Thomas Smith.

† Ellis, Second Series, ii. p. 287.

my suit for my son to the Queen's Majesty, and have likewise written to my Lord of Leicester, praying you to set in your helping hand to end this tedious suit, wherein for me to reason how much her Highness' displeasure is too long lasting, or how unmeet it is this young couple should thus wax old in prison, or how far better it were for them to be abroad and learn to serve, avails not, but I leave those and such like speeches to the friendly setting forth of my good Lord and you: only my seeking is that as there is none other cause since her Majesty's reign but hath had some favorable order or ende, so by your earnest conferring and joining with my good Lord, this young couple may feel some like of her Majesty's plentiful mercy, to the procurement whereof, the more earnest my Lord and you shall show yourselves, the more shall you sett forth the Queen's Majesty's honour, and as a mother I must needs say the better discharge your calling and credit. And so resting in prayer that God would bless your travail to some comfortable end, I take my leave.

"Your assured loving friend,

"ANNE SOMERSET."

But another year rolled away, and still the unhappy captives were pining in their gloomy

prison. The Duchess in vain besieged the most influential noblemen of the Court, and, hoping that the solemn period of Lent might soften the Queen's heart, she thus wrote to Cecil :—

*Anne, Duchess of Somerset, to Sir William Cecil.**

"Good Mr. Secretary,—If I have let you alone all this while, I pray you think it was to tarry for my Lord of Leicester's assistance, to whom as I have now written to take some occasion to do good in my son's cause, so are these to pray you to provoke him and join with him to further the same, trusting the occasion of this holy week and charitable time of forgiveness earnestly set forth by his Lordship, and will bring forth some comfortable fruit of relief to the long-afflicted parties, wherein my Lord and you cannot go so far, but God's cause and the Queen's honour bid you go farther. Thus much I thought good to write as giving occasion for my Lord and you to move the Queen's Majesty to Mercy, and not still to suffer this cause alone to rest without all favour and forgiveness. I can no more but once again pray your earnest dealing herein, and likewise that your humble duty of thanks for Mr. Mychell's passport may

* Ellis, Second Series, ii. p. 287.

be done to her highness, and so do leave you to God.

"Your assured loving friend,

"ANNE SOMERSET."

Still vain were all attempts to mitigate the doom of the prisoners. The vindictive anger of the Queen even threatened to extend to the younger brother of Hertford, and drew from the Earl the following expostulatory letter:—

*The Earl of Hertford to Sir William Cecil.**

"I well hoped after so long trouble that now, upon this occasion of speech for removes, some grace would have been obtained for us, but find the effect far otherwise, perceiving not only by Mr. Spencer that my Princess' still-continued heavy displeasure continueth, likewise the accustomed punishment both in restraint of liberty and otherwise, but also more to increase the sorrow of my case, therefore as I do understand by my brother Henry Seymour, he beareth some part of pain for the offence I only committed, to his great hinderment in a suit he hath to her Majesty. But, good Mr. Secretary, let it not be so, but following your constant favour in such reasonable cause, do you now shew yourself in

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xl. fol. 13, MS.

his behalf both a friend and a father unto him. The thing he sueth for will be a good help toward his better maintenance to serve her Highness, which chiefly moveth my earnest remembrances unto you in furthering of the same. For seeing it yet pleaseth not her Majesty to command to use again my humble duty of ready service, which causeth the one same great grief that of all other lieth next my heart, over sore redoubled would be the sorrow thereof, especially if for my cause, my brother should be enforced to leave that place wherein he presently receiveth so great comfort in showing (as I may say) both our duties of service to her Highness. And even so recommending both him and myself to your godly care and wisdom, I make an end.

"From my Lady Mason's House in London, this 24th of June, 1566.

"Your assured loving friend,

"E. Hertford."

But one of the prisoners was drawing towards a portal which even the cruel Queen could not bar against her escape. Lady Katherine was slowly dying—dying of grief at her separation from her husband. It was a spectacle

> "That might have soothed a tiger's rage,
> Or thawed the cold heart of a conqueror."

But the only mercy she could obtain was a removal from the Tower to a prison in the private house of some country gentleman, and for this purpose an order was issued to a miserable old man, Sir John Wentworth, to receive her and her train, and keep close guard over her.

Imagine an old lady and gentleman, whose chief business, in this life, is to take care of themselves and guard against all noise, trouble, and ailments, real or imaginary, suddenly called upon, in a peremptory style, to take charge of a dangerous State prisoner, with a train of troublesome servants, and loaded with the responsibility of any treason or mishap of any kind that might occur, and we shall sympathize with as well as smile at the following agonizing epistle :—

*Sir John Wentworth to the Lords of the Council.**

"After my most humble duty to your good Lordships. Having received a letter from the Queen her Majesty the 13th of May, willing me to receive into my house the Lady Katherine Grey, according to the tenor of her highness' letter, with other letters directed unto me from Sir William Cecil, which said letters I have sent

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xxxix. fol. 70, MS.

unto your honours to peruse, trusting that the Queen her Majesty, and you my good Lords of the Privy Council, will consider how unmeet a game I am to receive such a charge, being of years above three score and 6, and of late much visited with sickness, both at my coming from London and also since my coming into the country, and my wife for this fortnight or three weeks hath been visited with an ague, and doubteth much that it will breed a quartain. She is above the years of threescore and ten, and cannot go so much as into her garden to take any air, and my daughter the Lady Maltravers continueth still sick and little able to keep any company. And your good Lordships will rightly understand that my house is very unmeet to give the charge and safe keeping of such a person as the said Lady Grey is. By all the times of the night they may come to the windows of any chamber in my house, and talk and speak with her and deliver letters unto her, and, if she keep so disposed, she may either let them into her chamber or go out to them at the loops of the windows, if they choose thereat to abide. Wherefore I most humbly beseech the Queen her Majesty, with the consent and advice of your right honorable Privy Council, that I may be hereof discharged, for better it were for me to come up

to London and yield myself prisoner during my life, than to take upon me the charge to keep the said Lady in such straight order as is prescribed unto me, for that I am not able to discharge myself thereof according to my duty and trust that the Queen her Majesty hath purposed unto me in that behalf. Thus leaving to your Lordships, beseeching the Almighty God long to preserve your honours. Written this 14th of May, 1566.

"By your most humble to command,

"JOHN WENTWORTH."

The unhappy knight obtained no release. He was obliged to receive the whole train in his house, and only escaped by dying within a year—possibly through the unreasonable responsibility and cares heaped upon him at such an age.

Even the poor consolation of dying in peace was denied to Katherine. She was again transferred to the care of Sir Owen Hopton, who was to keep her at his private house instead of in the Tower. The order to him shows the same unfeeling spirit that had all along been manifested, and his answer illustrates the unwarrantable manner in which the comfort of private houses could be invaded in that happy age :—

*Mr. Rook Green to Sir William Cecil.**

"After my humble duty to your honour remembered, whereas I have lately received from the same letters by the which I understand that the Queen's Majesty's pleasure is that since it hath pleased Almighty God to call unto his mercy Sir John Wentworth, I should take the charge he had of the Lady Katherine until her Highness' resolutions were further known therein. Forasmuch as the funeral of the said Mr. Wentworth is now done, and that my Lady his wife and I, as his executors, have taken such order with his goods here as the time will serve; I have now no further to do with this house, but the same doth belong unto her Ladyship, who, besides her great age, which is above 71, is grown weak and sickly, as it is to be feared she cannot long continue without she shortly amend. And, as I hear, the Lady Maltravers, her daughter, doth not mind to keep the house, but is better disposed to sojourn in a convenient place for her Ladyship. So that if I should be thought meet to have the charge of the said Lady Katherine, I must remove her from hence unto my house, which is nothing meet, for many respects, for such a

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xliv. fol. 24, MS.

personage. I have no wife to take the charge of my house, the want whereof hath occasioned me to lie most part at the said Mr. Wentworth's, whose kinsman I was. My house and position is neither within nor without furnished meet to receive such a charge. My business is most times such, by the occasion of the great charge of children I have, that I am much enforced to be from my house. Sir, I do not deal thus plainly and truly with you for that I am loth to take the charge of her Ladyship (if I were meet for the same) for any misliking I have of her or hers, for I must for truth's sake confess as one that hath had good experience of her Ladyship's behaviour, how that it hath been very honorable and quiet, and her Ladyship's servants very orderly. But my only insufficiency, and partly for the causes before touched, moveth me to be a humble suitor unto your honour to have consideration unto the Privy Council, and to be a mean unto her Majesty to know her Grace's resolution and pleasure concerning the said Lady Katherine, and that I may be informed of the same from you by the bearer which I will appoint and perform according to my most bounden duty and to the best of my power. And thus I most humbly take my leave of your honour.

"From Gosfield Hall, in Essex, the 3rd day of October, 1561.

"Your most humble at commandment,

"ROOK GREEN."

*The Queen to Sir Owen Hopton.**

"Right trusty and wellbeloved, we greet you well. Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God to call to his mercy Sir John Wentworth, Knight, to whom the custody of the Lady Katherine was by us remitted, we thought meet upon special trust of your faithfulness and discretion to commit her to your custody. Wherefore we will and require you that upon the sight hereof and conference with Mr. Rook Green, one of the executors of Sir John Wentworth, either by himself or other knowledge from him in his behalf, ye do receive the said Lady Katherine into your custody, with such necessary servants as she presently hath to attend upon her. And that ye do not suffer her to have any conference with any stranger, nor that any visits be made unto her other than by yourself and of your household. And in case you shall be constrained either for pleasure or for neighbourhood to have any repair to your table, that she be not permitted to be in com-

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xliv., fol. 31, MS.

pany of them, but so to be excluded as yourself and your wife be not thereby restrained from the entertainment of any of your friends. And generally we require you and your wife to keep her, as one committed to your charge, from conference or rights of strangers according to the trust we repose in you. And as occasion shall arise wherein you shall desire to know our pleasure, you may thereof advertise such of our Privy Council of whom you shall receive answer. And for the charges of the debts of her and her necessary servants attending upon her, you shall be satisfied as by the aforesaid Rook Green you may at more length understand was answered for the same to the said Sir John Wentworth."

*Sir Owen Hopton to Sir William Cecil.**

"My duty most humbly remembered. May it like your honour to be advertised that the sixth of this month, I received the Queen her Highness' letters, touching the charge and custody of the Lady Katherine. Her Highness' pleasure wherein I shall in all points endeavour to accomplish as one that dare not presume to make suit to the contrary. Although I have great cause. For it may please you to under-

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xliv.

stand that I was presently prepared with my wife and small household to lie at the little house in Ipswich. And have disposed all things touching my provision in such sort as I must be more driven speedily to alter the same. And to rest in my poor house and place in Ipswich is in all respects unfit for the charge now imposed unto me. I was upon this occasion driven to treat with Mr. Rook Green, one of the executors of Sir John Wentworth, to stay the Lady Katherine there where she now remains till the 20th of this month, at which time I mean to receive her. And in the mean time to furnish my self of things requisite as I may. And thus much I thought it my duty to advise your honour of my doings herein, I most humbly praying at all times your good aid and opinion in my doings, Wherein I trust not to disappoint your good expectation. And so I humbly take my leave, the 11th of October, 1567.

"Yours at all times to command,

"Owen Hopton."

It was the last change that Lady Katherine was compelled to make. Sir Owen Hopton received her into his country house of Cockfield Hall, Yoxford, Suffolk, and there she slowly but surely continued to sink. At the time of her

removal from the Tower, her husband was also transferred to a private house in London, belonging to Lady Mason, but no farther mercy was extended; he was not allowed to see his dying wife, and was probably kept in ignorance of her state of health.

Early in January, 1568, Katherine became so weak as to be obliged to keep her bed. She declared her belief that she should not recover, and Sir Owen Hopton wrote to Cecil describing her condition, and begging him to ask the Queen again to permit the attendance of Dr. Symonds, one of the royal physicians who had lately attended her.*

But what royal physician could heal a broken heart?

"Cure her of that:
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
And with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?"

Once even this could have been done, but now it was all too late, and even at this hour she was denied a last farewell of her lonely lord.

* Letter of Sir Owen Hopton to Cecil.—State Papers, Eliz., Dom., lxvi. fol. 1, MS.

On the night of the 27th of January, she besought the service for the dying, and listened to the prayers and psalms of the church, which she only interrupted when she had strength from time to time to give utterance to her supplications to Heaven with her own lips. Her servants tried even then to inspire her with earthly hope, so pitiful did it seem to them for one so young to leave the world without one recompense, even there, for all her unmerited sufferings; and they said, "Madam, be of good comfort; with God's help you shall live and do many years."

But Katherine answered, "No, no; no life in this world; but in the world to come I hope to live ever, for here is nothing but care and misery, and there is life everlasting." As she uttered these words a deadly faintness oppressed her, and she called out, "Lord, be merciful to me. Father in Heaven, for thy Son Christ's sake have mercy upon me!" Again, Lady Hopton tried to recall her to the world, and said, "Madam, be of good comfort, for with God his favour, you shall live and escape this, for Mr. Cousen saith you have escaped many dangers when you were as like to die as you be now." "No, no, my Lady," said Katherine, "my time is come, and it is not God's will that I should live any

longer, and His will be done, and not mine: as I am, so shall you be; behold the picture of yourselves!"

So passed the dreary night, and, as the grey of morning began to break, she sent for Sir Owen Hopton. "Good madam, how do you do?" said the knight. "Even now going to God, Sir Owen," she answered, "even as fast as I can; and I pray you, and the rest that be about me, to bear witness with me that I die a true Christian, and that I believe to be saved by the death of Christ, and that I am one that He hath shed His most precious blood for, and I ask God and all the world forgiveness, and I forgive all the world."

As she uttered these words, thoughts of her two little sons came over her, and she said to Sir Owen Hopton, "I beseech you promise me one thing, that you yourself with your own mouth will make this request unto the Queen's Majesty, which shall be the last suit and request that ever I shall make unto her Highness, even from the mouth of a dead woman: that she would forgive her displeasure toward me, as my hope is she hath done; I must needs confess I have greatly offended her in that I made my choice without her knowledge, otherwise I take God to witness, I had never the heart to think any evil against her Majesty, and that she would

be good unto my children, and not impute my fault unto them, whom I give wholly unto her Majesty, for in my life they have had few friends, and fewer shall they have when I am dead, except her Majesty be gracious unto them. And I desire her Highness to be good unto my lord, for I know this my death will be heavy news for him, that her Grace will be so good as to send liberty to glad his sorrowful heart withal. I shall further desire you to deliver from me certain commendations and tokens unto my lord."

She then told her maid to give her the box containing her wedding-ring and ring of betrothal, and, having taken out the latter, she said to Sir Owen, "Here, Sir Owen, deliver this unto my lord, this is the ring that I received of him when I gave myself unto him and gave him my faith. This was the ring of my assurance unto my lord."

She then gave the knight her wedding-ring, saying, "Deliver this also unto my lord, and pray him even as I have been to him, as I take God to witness I have been, a true and a faithful wife, that he would be a loving and a natural father unto my children, unto whom I give the same blessing that God gave unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

A strange remembrance followed, doubtless born of the horrors of her long captivity. She took a third ring, set with a Death's head, encircled with the motto, "*While I lyve yours*," and said, "This shall be the last token unto my lord that ever I shall send him. It is the picture of myself."

A purple hue overspread her fingers, and as she beheld it she said, "Welcome Death," and raising her eyes and hands to Heaven, she prayed, "O Lord, for thy manifold mercies blot out of Thy book all mine offences."

As the dread Presence approached nearer and nearer, Sir Owen sent to the church to toll the passing bell. She heard the order, and said, "Good Sir Owen, let it be so." The solemn tones of the bell accompanied her dying words. She prayed for some time silently, and suddenly uttering the words, "O Lord, into Thy hands I commit my soul. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," she closed her eyes, and gently yielded up her spirit.

Thus perished, at the age of twenty-nine, the Lady Katherine Hertford, the victim of a foul act of despotism, a memorable example of innocence and weakness crushed beneath the iron heel of power. Those who identify strength and success with justice and right, and look on

weakness and failure as imbecilities that merit whatever wrongs they may receive, may here read a striking illustration of the effects of their favourite doctrine.

Some, anxious to relieve the Queen from this dark blot on her brilliant reputation, have endeavoured to fasten the crimes of treason and apostacy on her injured cousin. But not a single proof has been adduced; nothing that Queen Elizabeth herself could allege, as a cause of condemnation. Report could utter nothing but a few flying words, out of which the bitterest enemies of Katherine could not concoct a cause against her. Cecil, the stanchest Protestant and most loyal subject of his time, declared his belief in her innocence. She lived and died a Protestant, and with her last breath protested that her only offence against the Queen had been that of marrying without her consent. That act gave Elizabeth no excuse, for Katherine's relationship did not come within the degrees named by the statute of Henry VIII.; and as to the plea of no marriage, the names given by the people to Katherine and her son bear witness to the opinion, in her own day, of her virtue and truth. Even looking at the marriage as false, the cause of morality, of which Elizabeth professed herself

so severe a guardian, required a conduct the very reverse of what she followed. A public marriage was the only remedy in the eyes of virtue, hateful though it might be to prudery, which is by no means a synonym for the principle it affects to personify.

Strange to say, while an exact account of the expenses of Katherine's funeral remains,* the spot where she was first interred is not recorded. In the parish register of Yoxford, an entry of her burial is still to be seen; and a tradition long remained among the inhabitants of Yoxford that, after her death, her little dog refused food and pined away on her grave. It is not probable that her husband was allowed to carry out his cherished desire, during the reign of Elizabeth, of placing the remains of Katherine in the vault where his own were to rest. But that was eventually accomplished; and though Hertford was twice married after the loss of his early love, in death he returned to her. His second and third wives are buried in distant graves. Katherine alone sleeps by his side. In Salisbury Cathedral, after the inscription on the tomb, "Sacred to the memory of Edward, Earl of Hertford," may be read the following lines:—

* See Appendix II. E.

ALSO, TO HIS DEAR AND BELOVED WIFE, CATHERINE,

DAUGHTER OF HENRY AND FRANCES GREY, DUKE AND DUCHESS OF SUFFOLK, AND HEIRESS OF CHARLES BRANDON, DUKE OF SUFFOLK, AND MARY, SISTER OF HENRY VIII., AND QUEEN OF THE FRENCH: BY THE WILL OF HER GREAT UNCLE AND HENRY VII., HER GREAT-GRANDFATHER.

A MATCHLESS PAIR,

WHO, AFTER EXPERIENCING IN MANY WAYS THE HAZARDS OF A WAVERING FORTUNE, AT LENGTH REPOSE HERE TOGETHER IN THE SAME UNION IN WHICH THEY LIVED.

SHE,

A RARE MODEL OF VIRTUE, PIETY, BEAUTY, AND FIDELITY, THE BEST AND MOST ILLUSTRIOUS, NOT FOR HER OWN AGE, BUT FOR ALL TIME, PEACEFULLY AND PIOUSLY BREATHED HER LAST, ON THE 22ND OF JANUARY.*

It has been stated by some that the imprisonment of the Earl was continued for *nine years* after Katherine's death. The exact date of his release has not as yet been ascertained, but a letter of his, dated June 10th, 1571,† is written from his house at Tottenham, where he still bemoans his captivity. At first sight, to be a prisoner in his own house, seems light, but when we re-

* The date is here erroneous. Katherine died on the 27th of January.

† State Papers, Eliz., Dom., xlvi. fol. 74, MS.

member that he was surrounded by spies and gaolers who watched him as much as if he were in the Tower, we can well understand his bitter lamentations, which express no more relief than when uttered from the State prison. When, at last, the hour of release came, his best years had vanished, his health was sapped, his spirit crushed, and all manly spring and energy were destroyed. The romantic lover disappears from the scene, and in his place appears a slavish courtier, trembling at the lightest word of the Queen. So many noble minds have been broken by long captivity that, saddened as we must feel at the degrading transformation, we must pause ere we condemn. Ten years' imprisonment, surrounded by spies, and cut off from every influence that could cheer and ennoble, needed a mind of the strongest calibre, as well as the physical aid of health, to pass unscathed through such a wasting trial. To offend the Queen was now the great dread of Hertford's life. Yet he never ceased secretly to endeavour to establish the rights of Katherine's children. In 1580, 1588, and 1589, notarial instruments were drawn up by Thomas Redman, a public notary, declaring Thomas Seymour to be the "lawful and legitimate son of Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford and Dame

Katherine his wife." * The Earl also secretly placed a record in the Court of Arches to prove his marriage with Katherine lawful and his two children legitimate; but the intelligence of this last act reached the Queen, and she gave speedy proof that her hatred had not died with Katherine. Never should the children of her cousin succeed to the claims which had rendered their mother unbearable to the Queen. The Earl was immediately sent to the Tower, where, overwhelmed with the remembrance of his former misery, he made such humble submission to her Majesty, that after imprisoning him for four months, she signed an order for his release, with the understood condition that his children were to retain the stigma of illegitimacy, which deprived them of all claim to the Succession under the Will of Henry VIII.

The two sons grew up to man's estate, always, notwithstanding every act of Elizabeth, treated as the lawful children of Katherine, always spoken of by the people as Lord Beauchamp and Lord Thomas Seymour.

In 1585, Lord Beauchamp married Honora, daughter of Sir Richard Rogers, Knight. By her he had two sons—Edward and William, the latter born in 1587.

* State Papers, Eliz., Dom., MS.

The above narrative will fully explain the Queen's sudden outburst of rage, when Arabella Stuart—by so many esteemed the heiress to the crown—was declared in treaty of marriage with William Seymour, the son of Lord Beauchamp, and grandson of the unhappy, injured Katherine.

> ——"Shall Banquo's issue ever
> Reign in this kingdom;
> No son of mine succeeding?"

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST IMPRISONMENT OF ARABELLA.

IN the beginning of the year 1603, the Queen's health gave such decided tokens of failure that those who were not in the secret of Robert Cecil's correspondence with the King of Scotland began to ponder still more anxiously than ever on the fate of the kingdom. To many of the English nobles the prospect of the succession of James was distasteful in the highest degree. "Many persons," writes the French ambassador, Beaumont, to his master, "who know his (the Scotch king's) practices, and consider the conduct of his life and designs, greatly doubt that things will go wrong by his means, and others fear in general his humour, which is said to be very cruel and avaricious."*

This party, however, was not strong enough to organize any plan to prevent the succession of James, and their dislike to him was only manifested by praising Arabella Stuart, and endea-

* Despatches of Beaumont.

vouring, by their words, to make her more popular and prominent.* Still by this conduct their inclinations were shown, and Arabella's name had too often been used as a byword by plotters at home and enemies abroad, to render it quite safe utterly to disregard these symptoms at so eventful a moment.

The conduct of Arabella herself is involved in some mystery at this time, which, owing to the loss of her letters and those of the Shrewsbury family at this period, cannot be satisfactorily cleared; though, at the same time, as in the case of Katherine Grey, the accusations of plotting for the Succession are based on nothing better than rumour.

On one side, she is accused of endeavouring, by marriage, to unite her claims with those of the house of Hertford, preparatory to asserting her right to the throne; on the other, the whole affair is treated as a jest, got up by her to teaze the Earl of Hertford; while a third account denies that either of these ideas was entertained by her. Unfortunately, we have not a single letter or report of the opinion of those who alone could know the truth. The French ambassador, who was certainly not in the confidence of Cecil, though shaken at times, is generally of opinion

* Despatches of Beaumont.

that the whole matter was a trifle, while the Venetian ambassador, who, admitted for the first time, was not likely to possess better sources of information than Beaumont, unhesitatingly ascribes the death of the Queen to the ambition of Arabella, whom he styles, "*Omicida della Regina.*"*

A colour was added to the suspicions against Arabella by the suicide of her chaplain, who hanged himself immediately after her arrest, an act which by her enemies was attributed to his remorse and despair at the discovery of a plot in which he had engaged in her behalf. But the French ambassador, after making particular inquiries, discovered that the chaplain had committed suicide from disappointment at having lost a benefice, leaving behind him a paper so full of the praises of Arabella that those who sought for grounds of suspicion, considered that he must have some special motive for his laudation.†

But even these reports had little effect at first. Arabella was not considered dangerous till the extraordinary effect of the report on the Queen gave weight to the matter.

On the 26th of February, Beaumont writes

* Preface to "Calendar of State Papers," Venice. By Rawdon Brown, Esq.

† Despatches of Beaumont.

to Villeroi: "What I have written to his Majesty concerning the marriage of Madame Arbella is confirmed by the judgment of the wisest and most penetrating. People are only astonished that the Queen has lost her repose for some days about it. And fearing that there is something greater than is known, since she shows herself to be so strongly moved about it. I think that this inquietude is natural and pardonable at her age about a subject dangerous enough to be dealt with, though it must only be attributable to her humour."

In a letter to the French King, Beaumont declares his belief that the marriage "has been brought in question by some one who has a desire to get the Earl of Hertford, who is rich and envied, in trouble. For," he adds, with justice, "it would not be probable if there were a greater design in this affair that it would have been discovered to the Queen by the old Earl of Hertford and the old Countess of Shrewsbury, who have both the means and the authority to consider it together."

"On the 6th of March," De Beaumont writes, "I have found also that the letter which she (Arabella) wrote to the Earl of Hertford *contained only words of courtesy and credit for the bearer, and not of marriage with his grandson,* as was published."

The last letter seems to throw some light on the matter. Notwithstanding the slavish terror with which Hertford regarded the Queen, it is scarcely probable that he should have been the first to betray so dangerous a letter. The chance is rather that he showed the letter to Elizabeth in order to prove the falsehood of the reports that alarmed her. The following curious letter of Arabella is preserved in the Ashmolean Library at Oxford, and is without the date of the year, but was probably written at this time :—

*Lady Arabella Stuart to Edward Talbot.**

"NOBLE GENTLEMAN,—I am as unjustly accused of contriving a comedy as you (in my conscience) a tragedy. Counsellers are acquainted with both our bad hands, but whilst we may wash our hands in innocence, let the grand accuser and all his ministers do their worst, God will be on our side and reveal the truth to our most gracious sovereign, maugre all wicked and indirect practises wherewith some seek to misinform her Majesty. But I thank the Almighty, it pleaseth her Highness to deal most graciously with me, and by her Majesty's commandment, have liberty to choose my friends, by whom I

* Printed in Ballard's "Memoirs."

may better inform her Majesty of some matters nearly concerning herself and divers of the very best friends you and I have. Therefore I request you most earnestly to deliver a message from me to her sacred Majesty, which shall be greatly to her Majesty's contentment, your honour and behoofe, and is of great importance. It requireth great haste, and I have advertised a most honorable privy counsellor that I have sent for you to employ you in her Majesty's service, so that you may not excuse yourself or lose time in your own respect, whom it concerns more ways than this. And of your own honorable disposition, I doubt not but you would bestow a journey hither and to the court for my sake.

"I pray you, in kindest manner, commend me to my Lady Ogle and sweet Mrs. Talbot, whom I am very desirous to see, and entreat her to hasten you hither, for the sooner you come, the better for us all.

"Your Father's love and your
"Faithful friend,
"ARBELLA STUART."

Superscribed,
"To my honorable and assured good Friend,
Mr. Edward Talbot."
Endorsed, 16th Feb.

One of the most profound reasons for suspecting a plot was, "the great familiarity and ordinary communication of Mr. Cecil with the Earl of Shrewsbury, uncle of Madame Arbella."* Now that the secret correspondence of Cecil has been unveiled, all this is intelligible. The uncertain state of the Succession had long rendered it necessary for the peace of the kingdom that this most important question should not be left to the decision of a possible civil war, and the Queen herself rendered it quite impossible to discuss and settle the matter openly. And in order to prevent the hostile parties from coalescing it was better, as well as from acquiescence in the wishes of the Queen, to keep the matter a secret. But Cecil was placed in a difficult position; and it was possibly the gnawing fear that he too might be in the plot, that deepened the bitterness of suspicion in the Queen, even if she were convinced by Hertford of the unfounded nature of the report of Arabella's marriage with his grandson. Cecil's kindness to Arabella made matters worse, and the probability is, that there was an understanding between him and the Shrewsbury family to keep Arabella out of the way till the dangerous crisis should be past. The friendly feeling maintained between Cecil

* Despatches of Beaumont.

and the Shrewsburys during the whole time of Arabella's detention seems to justify this view of the matter.

The death of the Countess of Nottingham is stated by all contemporaries to have produced a sad effect on the Queen, though none make the slightest allusion to the story of the ring; but on the contrary, her tears and anguish are uniformly attributed to her affection for the countess and her grief for her loss. Arabella was now removed to Sheriff Hutton;* and so completely were the people in ignorance of the real state of the Queen's feelings with regard to her, that a second and contradictory report was spread that she would shortly be declared heiress to the Crown.

Henry IV. became anxious on the subject, and wrote to Beaumont for a personal account of Arabella, and desired especially to know if she was a Roman Catholic. To the latter question Beaumont returned answer: "I have never heard that the said lady was of any other religion than that of this kingdom;" and on the 15th of March, writing to Villeroi, he says: "Whether Madame Arbella will be brought to this town, and there made to live in prison, or at liberty, I cannot yet tell you, such is the diversity of opinion and

* Lingard.

judgment; but I think rather the last than the first. Some call the affair a comedy, others a tragi-comedy. For myself, I confess to you that I cannot yet see clearly enough to give any name. Still I always keep to my first and strongest opinion that I have sent you—that I see no great cause for alarm."

Elizabeth grew worse rapidly. On the 19th of March, the Lords of the Council came to a resolution to close the ports if the Queen's malady increased. On the same day, Beaumont wrote to the King of France by far the most reasonable explanation of the Queen's condition that has been given. Physical causes were at the root of her decay, and her state of bodily health rendered her unable to cope with phantoms, which, to the eye of disease, appeared monstrous realities. The Queen, who had passed triumphantly through a reign beset with every danger that can waylay a crown,—who had not lost a grain of courage when the whole force of the mightiest kingdom in the world was sent forth to attack her—was not likely to crouch and die terror-stricken or heart-broken because a woman was said to be plotting to succeed her. Elizabeth had one way of acting in these cases—viz., to seize the suspected persons, and shut them up in some safe prison, without much

melancholy on the subject. Long before it was suspected, her health was undermined. In 1601, when she went to open Parliament, the weight of the royal purple, hitherto so proudly borne, proved too heavy for her aged and sinking frame. She staggered, and would have fallen but for the support of the peers who stood near her. And though she went through all the business of the State, and six weeks before her death is described by the Venetian ambassador as if in good health, still, despite all her jewelled and gorgeous attire and brave bearing, the spoiler was sapping her strength.

On the 19th of March, Beaumont wrote to the King of France: "I have thought it my duty to send a courier to your Majesty in advance, in order to tell you that, since seventeen days, the Queen has been very ill. And that, having slept little or nothing during this time, and eaten much less than usual, she is seized with a restlessness which is yet not a decided fever. She has an insupportable fire in the stomach and a continual thirst in the mouth, which constrains her every minute to moisten it, in order that the hot dry phlegm with which she is pressed may not choke her. Some attribute the cause of her illness to the extreme displeasure that she has conceived in her mind about what has passed

concerning Madame Arbella; others about the affairs of Ireland, in which she was forced by those of her Council, against her nature and courage, to give the pardon she had so long refused to the Earl of Tyrone. Many also declare that she is seized in her heart with remorse for the death of the Earl of Essex, who was beheaded just two years ago. All agree that she is worse. She has shown an extraordinary melancholy in her countenance and her actions. But it is much more probable that the infirmities of her age and the fear of death have played the greatest part; for, besides the admirable care that she takes to preserve her health, by the regimen of her life and the tempering of her passions, I do not think that the above causes have been sufficient to make such a change in her mind, that her body would feel it with such violence."

A member of Lord Burghley's household, and therefore one who must have had good chances of knowing the truth, also writes of her last days: "She was wholly addicted to silence and solitariness, which gave occasion of suspicion that she was afflicted in mind; but being moved by some of her Council to impart such grief as they doubted might trouble her, she answered, that she 'knew nothing in the world worthy to trouble

her.' And it is a constant opinion of such as were most inward with her, that she was then free from any such impression, as it is not altogether unlikely, considering that melancholy diseases (as physicians tell us) proceed not always from the indisposition of the mind, but sometimes from the distemperature of humour in the body, causing a kind of numbness and stupefaction of the senses."*

The same authority tells us that, on being desired to provide for her spiritual wants and recommend her soul to God, she replied, mildly, "That I have done long ago." And Camden, who was also a contemporary, speaks of Arabella's proposed marriage as "a false report."

The story of Arabella's conduct having anything to do with the Queen's death may therefore be dismissed as one of the unfounded reports got up by those who, ignorant of real causes, will assign any rather than acknowledge themselves not admitted to confidence. The melancholy and morbid feelings that saddened the last hours of Queen Elizabeth, and which have afforded so eloquent a subject for shallow moralists to discourse upon, were simply such as might have beset the best and strongest nature clouded

* Ellis, "Letters," Third Series, vol. iii. p. 194.

and struggling with a mortal malady. Contemptible is the spirit that would extract the petty triumph of a Pharisee from the pangs of departing greatness, and represent those agonies as the effect of a life which, darkened as it was with the spots of a semi-barbarous and despotic age, had proved invaluable to the best interests of her country, and stands out in glorious contrast with those of her wholly selfish and inferior successors.

On the 22nd of March, the ports were closed, and Beaumont writes: "For three days, the Queen has been looked upon as dead, having remained very long in a cold sweat without speaking, and sometime before, she had said she wished to live no longer and desired death. Yesterday, and the day before yesterday, she began to repose and to feel better, after a little gland in the form of an imposthume, or, as some say, an ulcer in her throat, had burst, which greatly relieved her."

On the 28th, he writes: "The illness of the Queen continues and grows worse, with signs and symptoms such as make her life generally despaired of. She already seems in a state of stupefaction, and remains sometimes for two or three hours without speaking. For two days, she has remained seated on cushions, with her

finger almost always in her mouth, her eyes open and fixed on the ground."

On the 1st of April, he writes: "The Queen draws now towards her end. Since yesterday, she has been given up by all her physicians. She has been lifted into bed by force, having been for ten days seated on cushions dressed, and without wishing to repose or undress for a single hour. She seemed better, and asked for some broth, which gave her attendants some hope. But shortly after, speech left her, and since then she has eaten nothing; and now remains lying on her side, without speaking or looking at any one. Yesterday she had some meditations read to her, and among others those of M. Duplessis. In this state, I do not think she can make a will or declare her successor. The Lords of the Council have already begun to call together the earls and barons of the kingdom who are in the city, and have sent for the greater number of those absent, among whom the Earl of Hertford has refused to come."

On the night of the 23rd of March,* the lord admiral, the lord keeper, and the secretary, Cecil, approached the bedside of the Queen, and

* MS. of Lady Southwell. The dates of Beaumont's letters are five days later than those of the English State Papers. I have, however, given them unaltered.

asked her to name her successor. She seemed still speechless, and, perhaps to test the state of her intellect, they asked if the King of France should succeed her. She returned no answer; and when they proposed the King of Scotland she still remained mute. A third time they spoke, and proposed the Lord Beauchamp, eldest son of Katherine Grey. That name pierced even the "dull cold ear" of approaching death. Elizabeth for an instant recovered speech, and with inextinguishable hate she spent her last efforts against the son of her dead rival. She said hastily, "I will have no rascal's son in my seat;" and spoke no more in this world. By various signs she was supposed to intimate her wish that James should succeed her, but, like all such signs, obscurity confuses them, and nothing of certain import can be drawn from such vague intimations. A few hours after midnight she ceased to breathe; and, by the precautions of Cecil and his friends, the unjust Will of Henry VIII. was disregarded, and the country thus saved from civil war; the King of Scotland was proclaimed so peacefully, that Beaumont declared "there appeared no sort of alteration or division any more than if the reign had not changed, every man having returned to his trade and his business, and the Lords of

the Council to assemble and dispense justice as before."

That Arabella was considered harmless and innocent by all those most likely to be informed, may be judged by her being appointed chief mourner at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth. But the coldness and suspicion with which she had for so many years been regarded by her royal kinswoman now had its natural effect. She rejected the proffered honour, saying, that "sith her access to the Queen in her lifetime might not be permitted, she would not after her death be brought upon the stage for a public spectacle."*

And a public spectacle she certainly would have been, attracting the liveliest curiosity after all the gossip that had lately been circulated against her.

Mystery still hangs over the report which, carried to every Court of Europe, threw a doubt over the English Succession, which was not solved till the peaceable proclamation of James dispersed the phantom. One thing, however, is remarkable as exhibiting the spirit of the time with regard to matrimony. No astonishment is exhibited at the discrepancy of age in the two parties, nor is that once alleged as an obstacle.

* Sloane MS., 718.

At the time that Arabella Stuart was accused of making the proposal, she was twenty-seven and William Seymour a boy of fifteen! But these things never stood in the way of a political alliance. Charles IX. of France was not only proposed as a husband for Queen Elizabeth, but the silly boy declared himself desperately enamoured of her. It is true there are occasions in which even so great a difference in age, and "on the wrong side," as the saying is—*i.e.*, when the woman is older than her husband—proves no impediment to mutual happiness. But then *both* parties must not only be characters above the average, but the younger must be of an age in which the character is settled and serious enough to feel the full measure of the responsibilities of life—old in wisdom and knowledge, if young in years. Such were the conditions that crowned with felicity the marriage of Elizabeth Rowe, who was twelve years older than her husband; and that of the celebrated Rahel Varnhagen von Ense, who, in a union with a man thirteen years younger than herself, found a devotion and a faithfulness for which youthful beauties continually sigh in vain, so rare are they indeed under any circumstances. But in both these cases the lovers were exceptional men, high above the common standard, and requiring

that intellectual and spiritual sympathy only needed and recognised by a peculiar and profound order of mind.

That Arabella Stuart could feel the slightest gleam of love for a boy of fifteen was impossible, and the charge brought against her in 1603, would, *if proved,* stamp her as a worldly, speculating woman, capable of sacrificing the highest feelings of her nature to an alliance, suitable in birth and fortune, but ridiculous in every other respect—*at the time she is first accused.*

CHAPTER X.

THE ACCESSION OF JAMES THE FIRST.

ON the 5th of April, 1603, the Solomon of Britain set out on horseback, with a large retinue, for his English dominions. Through every town he passed, a gorgeous hospitality and welcome awaited him, enough to dazzle the man who, in his poverty-stricken realm of Scotland, had not money enough for his household without the aid of Queen Elizabeth.

His first act of ungraciousness was shown in repulsing the people who came in crowds to see him, by declaring that their multitudes rendered provisions so dear wherever he went, as to oppress the country, and that, therefore, only those who had special business should be allowed to approach him, "some of great name and office being sent home to their places." Among these were Sir Walter Raleigh, whose proud spirit could ill brook the affront, and Lord Cobham, afterwards associated with him in the charge of treason.

The Earl of Shrewsbury had signed the proclamation, and now, with the accustomed loyalty of his family, he gave the King a royal reception at Worksop, one of the houses built by Bess. Here James should also have been received by Arabella, but for some reason she appears to have still remained at Sheriff Hutton; though the offer made to her to attend the late Queen's funeral seems to prove her at liberty.

Earl Gilbert invited his friends from far and near, and swept the country for "fatt capons, hennes, partridges, and the like."* As the King rode through the park, a number of huntsmen, dressed in green, came out and offered to show him some game—a piece of politeness dearer to the heart of James than anything else could be. He accepted the offer and, after a vigorous chase, he went into the house, where, says a tract of the time, "he was so nobly received with superfluitie of all things, that still every entertainment seemed to exceed other." Excellent music accompanied a luxurious and profuse banquet, after which the King retired to rest, and after breakfast the next morning, took his departure. Such a store of provision was left after the breakfast of "fowl, fish, and almost everything, besides bread, beere, and wine, that it was left open for any man that

* Letter of the Earl of Shrewsbury.—Hunter's "Sheffield," 93.

would to come and take." No wonder that Earl Gilbert got in debt. There was, however, besides the traditional hospitality of his house, a special need for him to show his loyalty as the uncle of Arabella Stuart. Thirteen knights were made among the Earl's friends by the King at Worksop.

But at the next station, the King performed a deed ominous of the way in which he could render justice. A man being taken up for stealing, was, without trial, hanged by the command of the King, while a number of prisoners, without special claim, were set free from prison, as examples of the royal mercy. The next most loyal reception was at "Maister Oliver Cromwell's," uncle to the renowned Protector. James entered his house in state, preceded by the Earl of Southampton, who carried the sword of state, and there experienced the most luxurious entertainment, not excepting that of the Earl of Shrewsbury, that had been given him since his departure from Scotland. Such plenty and variety of meats, such diversity of wines, and those "not riffe ruffe but ever the best of their kinde." Beer and ale flowed in like proportion, and as the cellars were open to every man's call, we need not be surprised that the company who flocked "to see the King" was greater than any since his progress. Here the heads of the University of Cambridge, clad in scarlet gowns

and corner caps, attended and read a Latin welcome to his Majesty, and presented him with some books in commendation of the late Queen. "Maister Cromwell" also presented him with a "very great and a very faire-wrought standing cup of gold, goodly horses, flete and deepe-mouthed houndes, divers hawkes of excellent wing," and also gave fifty pounds to be distributed among the King's servants. James royally expressed his satisfaction by saying, at his departure, "Morry, mon, thou hast treated me better than any one since I left Edinburgh," a speech not less remarkable for its elegance than for its delicacy to those who, having, like poor Gilbert Shrewsbury, plunged themselves into debt and difficulty to welcome the King, found their efforts now sink into insignificance.

On the 11th of May, James arrived at Whitehall, and the pomp of the long series of receptions over, Cecil waited on him to speak in behalf of Arabella. She had been, during the progress of James, transferred from Sheriff Hutton to Wrest House, the seat of Henry, Earl of Kent, who had married one of the daughters of Earl Gilbert,* and was here a kind of prisoner, though treated as one of the family. On the accession of James, seeing that the whole nation received him with such

* Letter of the Earl of Shrewsbury.—Lambeth MS. 709, fol. 151.

unanimous satisfaction that no danger was to be apprehended from those who might have made a rallying-point of Arabella, Cecil probably induced the King to send orders for her release, for when James arrived in London, Arabella was at liberty, and had already had an interview with him when Cecil appealed on her behalf. A little uneasiness still remained. After a long conversation on the subject, James told Cecil that he thought the Earl of Kent's house, from whence Arabella came, was still the fittest place for her.* But Cecil was aware of her high spirit, and that, if provoked, she might really revolt and cause much trouble; whereas kind treatment would induce her to act according to his wishes. He therefore told the King that he thought "she would not go thither nor to any other place as *commanded* thereunto, for so she might think that she were still as under a kind of restraint, and that now she had spoken with his Majesty, if she had not given him satisfaction, she might conceive that she should never be able to give him satisfaction, and so it would redouble her grief and affliction of mind wherewith she had been too long already tormented." He therefore asked the King "to deal tenderly with her," and to send her word, "that forasmuch as he had spoken

* Letter of the Earl of Shrewsbury.—Lambeth MS. 709, fol. 151.

with her and found her so well inclined to do all things that might give his Majesty satisfaction, he would leave her to the charge of her own good discretion, assuring himself that she would do nothing of moment whatsoever without his privity and good allowance."* As James still hesitated, Cecil promised that, if the King would agree to this, though he would not order her to limit herself to any place, yet that he, with the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury, would undertake that Arabella should *choose* a residence with the Marchioness of Northampton at Sheen. On this the King agreed to Cecil's request. The royal message was sent to Arabella, and she was once more at liberty.

Cecil found no difficulty in fulfilling his part of the bargain. Arabella went to Sheen, and from thence addressed the two following letters to Cecil on the subject of an allowance as a scion of royal blood. He acted very cautiously, for it would not have done to press the claims of Arabella too closely. The King was well inclined to her, and it was better to have patience.

Lady Arabella Stuart to the Lord Cecil.†

"My good Lord,—I presume to trouble your

* Letter of the Earl of Shrewsbury.—Lambeth MS. 709, fol. 151.

† This and the following letters from the Sloane MS.,

Lordship in renewing that Request which when I last spake with you, I could not please you to grant, or at least to let me know you would make me bound to you in that kind; that is, that it would please your Lordship to remember the King's Majesty of my maintenance, which if it be not a matter fit for you (as which your Lordship hath already dealt in) my Uncle of Shrewsbury is greatly deceived, or hath deceived me. But I suppose neither, and therefore presume so much of your honorable disposition that you will endeavour to obtain me that which it will be for his Majesty's honour to grant. And therefore your Lordship, in that respect (if there were no other), I doubt not, will perform more than it was your pleasure to promise me, I think, because you would have the benefit greater coming unpromised. And so wishing your Lordship increase of honour and happiness, I cease.

"From Sheen, the 14th of June, 1603.

"Your Lordship's friend,*

"ARBELLA STUART."

4164, are taken from copies made by Birch of the originals, then in the possession of Lord Weymouth, and now among the manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath.

* "Lord," "Sir," and "Mr.," are frequently used almost indiscriminately for the same person in the old manuscripts. Cecil was only a Knight at this time.

*Lady Arabella Stuart to Lord Robert Cecil.**

"My good Lord,—It hath pleased his Majesty to alter his purpose concerning the pension whereof your Lordship writ to me. It may please to move his Majesty that my present want may be supplied by his Highness with some sum of money which needeth not be annual, if it shall so seem good to his Majesty. But I would rather make hard shift for the present, than be too troublesome to his Highness, who I doubt not will allow me maintenance in such liberal sort as shall be for his Majesty's honour, and a testimony to the world no less of his Highness' Princely bounty, than natural affection to me. Which good intention of his Majesty's, I doubt not but your Lordship will further, as you shall see occasion, whereby your Lordship shall make me greatly bounden to you, as I already acknowledge myself to be. And so with humble thanks for your honorable letter, I recommend your Lordship to the protection of the Almighty, who send you all honour and contentment.

"From Sheen, the 22nd of June.

"Your Lordship's poor friend,

"Arbella Stuart."

Superscribed, "To the Right Honorable, my very good Lord, the Lord Cecil."
Endorsed, "22 June, 1603, Lady Arbella Stuart to my Lord."

* Ballard's "Memoirs."

*Lady Arabella Stuart to Lord Robert Cecil.**

"My good Lord,—I humbly thank your Lordship that it will please you amongst your great affairs to remember my Suit to his Majesty for the alteration of my pension. I hope I shall shortly have the means to acquaint your Lordship with it myself. If I should name two thousand pounds for my present occasions it would not exceed my necessity, but I dare not presume to crave any certain sum, but refer myself wholly to his Majesty's consideration, and assure myself I shall find your Lordship my honorable good friend, both in procuring it as soon, and making the sum as great as may be. So with humble thanks to your Lordship for your continual favours, I recommend your Lordship to the protection of the Almighty. From Sheen, the 23rd of June, 1603.

"Your Lordship's poor friend,

"Arbella Stuart.

Superscribed, "To the Right Honorable, my very good Lord, the Lord Cecil."

The submission of Arabella to go to Sheen had a good effect. James manifested the most kindly spirit towards her, and appointed her state governess to his eldest daughter, the

* Ballard's "Memoirs."

Princess Elizabeth, according to a custom which required that office to be filled by the lady nearest of the blood royal. She was allowed to go to her uncle's at Welbeck, to meet the Queen, and make the acquaintance of her royal charge.

Early in June, Queen Anne of Denmark departed from Scotland, to follow her consort to their new dominions. Bess of Hardwick was very anxious to receive her at Chatsworth, and deputed Arabella to invite the royal traveller. But an unpleasant memory was attached to Bess, as the gaoler of the king's mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, and Anne of Denmark declined the invitation—a refusal which was rendered doubly mortifying to Bess, as the Queen accepted that of her bitter enemy and former ally, Gilbert, Earl of Shrewsbury. Again that unhappy man, steeped as he already was in debt, was obliged to plunge into fresh expenses to give a worthy reception to the Queen and her children at his house at Worksop. Sir Henry Pierrepoint, who had married a daughter of Bess, had also the honour of entertaining her Majesty at his house at Holme Pierrepoint. But it was at Welbeck, the residence of her uncle, Sir Charles Cavendish, that Arabella first made the acquaintance of the Queen and Princess. The account of the meeting exactly illustrates the artificial manners of the

time, and is quoted from the words of an eye-witness.

"One day as we were coming down a hill in Nottinghamshire, we perceived a great company, which, as we drew near, appeared like what you have read of the shepherds and shepherdesses of Arcadia. One band was of young women dressed all in white, with garlands on their heads, and on their arms baskets of flowers, which they strewed along the road, followed by young men clad also in white, and playing on the tabor, pipe, and all kinds of rural instruments, leading a flock of sheep, whose wool was white as snow. Cornucopias, and other emblems of peace and plenty, were carried by several of the party, singing choruses in praise of the royal family, and of the blessings of peace, which their accession was to secure to the whole Island.

"A troop of hunstmen arrayed in green and silver came next, conducting a herd of tame deer with their horns tipped with gold. These swains told us that Diana, hearing of the Queen's approach, was coming to invite her to repose herself in one of her retreats. They hardly ended their speech, which was in verse, when we heard the sound of bugles from a neighbouring wood, out of which we saw several beautiful girls advance, attired like nymphs; and last of all

appeared Diana—that is, a lady representative of the goddess, who proved to be the Lady Arabella Stuart."*

The spectacle met with complete success. The young princess was charmed with her state governess, and "was never happier than when in her company."† Arabella joined the Queen's train, and by her conversation and powers of pleasing rendered the rest of the journey to London lively and agreeable.

The duties of Arabella were merely nominal, Lady Kildare and Lady Harrington having the real work to perform. Consequently, when the Princess Elizabeth separated from the rest of the company in order to rest at Combe Abbey, the residence of Lord Harrington, Arabella did not accompany her, but followed the Queen and Prince Henry to London.

At Althorpe, the seat of Sir Robert Spencer, the royal travellers were sumptuously entertained, and at their entrance into the gardens, a masque composed by Ben Jonson was given to them, and was so well received by the Queen, as to be the forerunner of many orders to the poet for

* Extracted from a MS. "Life of Elizabeth of Bohemia." Quoted by Miss Strickland, "Lives of the Queens of Scotland," viii. p. 7.

† Ibid.

similar wares, which brought in a comfortable income, though about as creditable to his genius as a tavern sign-board to an artist.

At Easton Neston, at the seat of Sir George Fermor, the travellers were met by the King, and from thence proceeded to Windsor, where they were joined by the Princess and her two under-governesses.

At Windsor, the King held a chapter of the Garter, in order to install as Knights of that ancient order Prince Henry, then a little boy nine years old, the Duke of Lennox, Lord Southampton, the Earl of Pembroke, and the Earl of Mar.* The Queen, who was at enmity with the Earl of Mar, refused to be present, on account of Mar being among the favoured ones, but the Princess Elizabeth, with Lady Arabella, witnessed the ceremony from a recess in one of the windows of St. George's Hall.†

After it was over, the Queen held a drawing-room, at which was present with Arabella, her aunt, Mary of Shrewsbury. Both were "most sumptuous in apparell, and exceeding rich and glorious in jewels."‡ Probably Arabella's were

* Lady Anne Clifford's Diary.

† Howe's "Chronicle."

‡ MS. "Life of Elizabeth." Quoted by Miss Strickland.

partly from the restored legacy of her grandmother, Margaret Lennox.

Shortly after this, the Princess Elizabeth was consigned wholly to the care of Lady Harrington and her husband. When the Princess was ready to depart for Combe Abbey, she found it almost impossible to part from Lady Arabella, to whom she had become deeply attached;* only the assurance that Arabella was still to be her state governess and see her at all vacations could console her. Arabella herself then set out on a visit to her relations, and, after a short stay in the country, returned to the Court, which was now driven from London by the plague, and was resting temporarily at Farnham, whither Earl Gilbert accompanied her.

Her naturally high spirits, and the spies by whom she was surrounded, made Gilbert anxious lest she should incautiously give utterance to words that might be distorted into mischief, and he gave her much good advice about her conduct at Court. Arabella was herself in some trepidation. The restraint under which Cecil had so lately thought it necessary to place her, had shown her that she had stood on the verge of a pitfall. Earl Gilbert especially warned her against levity and mirth, and anxiously charged her to maintain

* MS. "Life of Elizabeth." Quoted by Miss Strickland.

the high dignity of her birth and station with becoming gravity. He gave her a letter of introduction to the Lord Chamberlain, and, bidding her farewell with great affection, he took his departure for the north. Shortly after, he received from her the following epistle :—

*Lady Arabella Stuart to Gilbert, Earl of Shrewsbury.**

"I humbly thank you for your Letter to my Lord Chamberlain Sidney in my behalf, which I have not yet delivered, and for letting me understand your course, which though it bend directly northward, will not hinder you from thinking and looking to the South, where you leave me to take my fortune in an unknown climate, without either art or instruction, but what I have from you, whose skilful directions I will observe as far forth as they are Puritan like. And though I be very frail, I must confess, yet I trust you shall see in me the good effects of your prayer and your great glory for reforming my untowardly resolutions and mirth, for great shall the melancholy be that shall appear in my letter to you, which as the best preservative of

* Sloane MS., 4164.

health, I recommend to you, to whom I wish long life, honour, and all happiness.

"From Farnham, the 14th of August, 1603.

"Your Disciple,

"ARBELLA STUART."

"To the Right Honorable, my very good Uncle, the Earl of Shrewsbury."

As yet the application of Arabella for an allowance had been unsuccessful. Her position was certainly a hard one. She was commanded to reside at Court—a Court where all the ladies were expected to dress magnificently and make numerous presents, besides all their other own unavoidable expenses. As a princess of the blood royal, she was to maintain a retinue suitable to her royal dignity; and as all these expenses had begun before any income was settled, she was getting yet more deeply into debt, and anxious and irritated at the manner in which she was treated. She wrote again to her good uncle, beseeching him to write to Cecil and counteract the influence of Lord Henry Howard, who spitefully endeavoured to hinder her obtaining that allowance of "Diete" which she required for the maintenance of her household. Notwithstanding the hard manner in which Arabella had been treated by Queen Elizabeth, she evidently turned with

disgust from the first "besotted levity and blatant joy" with which the fickle courtiers hailed her successor. The miserable gossip and petty scandals of the "great and gracious ladies" who had flattered the late Queen, and done all in their power to encourage her foibles, while they contributed nothing to her greatness, were revolting to Arabella, who now wrote the following letter to her Aunt Mary: —

*Lady Arabella Stuart to the Countess of Shrewsbury.**

"MADAME,—I have written to my Uncle how the world goes with me. I beseech you get him to write to Lord Cecil in my behalf, and to take notice of his and my Lord H. Howard's crossing the King's intention for my allowance of diet. I think that makes others deny me that the King granted, and makes even himself think anything enough, when the wise counsellors think it too much. You know his inclination to be kind to all his kin, and liberal to all below, and you know his protestations of extraordinary affection to me. Therefore I am sure it is evil counsel that withholds him so long from doing for me in as liberal sort, or more, as he hath done for any. The Queen was very desirous to have

* Sloane MS., 4164, fol. 168.

accompanied the King. When she speaks of you, she speaks very kindly and honorably of you. Our great and gracious ladies have no gesture nor fault of the late Queen unremembered, as they say who are partakers of their talk, as I thank God I am not. Mr. Elphinstone is my very good friend and yours much devoted.

"I pray you let me hear of my faults from you when you will have me mend them, for I am sure you shall hear of them there, and I have neither those faults which are thought so here, nor those qualities good that are most gracious here. Now you are a bystander, you may guide and direct better than ever.

"I hereby take my leave, praying the Almighty to send you all happiness.

"From Basing, the 23rd of August (1603?).

"Your Ladyship's niece to command,

"ARBELLA STUART.

"I beseech you, commend me to my Uncle Charles and my Aunt, and all my Cousins with you. Sir William Stuart remembereth his service to you and my Uncle."

Arabella, admired and caressed as she had been when a child by all who saw her, had lost none of her attractions. The approving manner in which both James and his Queen spoke of

her, had removed all fear of arousing his jealousy, and her frank and open heart won her friends on all sides. No party was complete without her—envy alone detracted from her merits. Yet the excitement of the Court was little to her taste. Forced as she was to squander precious hours in useless ceremonies and idle masques and games with which the Queen and those around her killed the time that hung so heavy on their hands, still Arabella contrived to reserve fixed hours for study, now rendered doubly valuable by the difficulty with which they were obtained.

Her spirits were high, and gave her an appearance of almost dangerous gaiety, which, while it enchanted the strangers round her, gave cause for care to those who knew her best, and were aware how the most innocent actions can be misinterpreted and misreported. Among the courtiers was a simple knight, named Sir William Fowler. He was the son of Thomas Fowler, the executor of Margaret Lennox, and as such had been brought into connexion with the Shrewsbury family. He kept up a constant correspondence with Earl Gilbert, informing him of what passed at Court, the disposition, humour, &c., of the King and Queen, advising him as to his behaviour to them, and all the little news which is invaluable to a courtier, who depends so much on the smile or frown of a monarch. Ara-

bella, too, wrote a weekly chronicle to the Shrewsburys—unhappily only a few letters of which survive—but in which we have doubtless lost one of the most perfect pictures of a court that ever were written, if we may judge from the specimens that remain. But entertaining as her letters were, Gilbert wanted to know what passed in her absence, and matters that she could not impart, and indeed any news was welcome. Fowler had only just been introduced to Arabella, of whom, however, he had long heard such reports that he might well esteem it an unlooked-for joy when he obtained an introduction to her. Enraptured as he was with his acquaintance, yet even he, who is spoken of as a simpleton, seems to have perceived dangers that he dared not disclose in so perilous a missive as a letter. Writing to Gilbert, after describing Arabella as an "eighth wonder of the world," he adds, ominously, "If I durst, I would write more plainly my opinion of things that fall out here among us, but I dare not without your Lordship's warrant deal so." He then encloses a sonnet, "to the honour of her whose sufficiency and perfections merit more regard than this ungrateful and depressing age will afford or suffer."

I transcribe the sonnet, because, notwithstanding the fantastic language, it gives a true

idea of Arabella in her serious moments in those hours of study and intervals from the frivolities of the Court:—

"*To The Most Verteous And Trewlye Honorable Lady Arbella Stewart.*

"Whilst organs of vaine sence transportes the minde,
Embracing objectes both of sight and care,
Toutch, smell, and tast, to which frail flesh inclinde,
Preferrs such trash to thinges which are more deare,
Thou godlie nymphe possest with heavenlie feare,
Divine in soule, devote in life, and grave,
Rapt from thy sence and sex, thy spirits doth steire,
Tries to avoyd which reason doth bereave.
O graces rare! which time from shame shall save,
Wherein thou breath'st (as in the seas doth fish
In salt not saltish), exempt from the grave
Of sad remorse, the lott of worldlinge's wish.
O ornament both of thyself and sex!
And mirrour bright, wher virtues doth reflex."

Ridiculous as these lines may be, taken as poetry, they nevertheless convey the honest opinion of the worthy knight, whose fit office was that of Secretary and Master of Requests to Queen Anne of Denmark. Foolish as may have been his manners and style of talking, he was as faithful and devoted to the "bright particular star" of his idolatry as a cleverer man could have been. He was never weary of sounding her praises: the sight of her poured joy into his heart, and he gave utterance to his feelings with an

artlessness that, sneered at as it was by all around him, and by all who have spoken of him, was yet kindly received by Arabella, who knew well how rare is an honest heart, how honorable a sincere affection, let it come from whom and in what guise it may. She made no "game" of Fowler, never "snubbed" him, or exhibited him as a triumph or ridiculous spectacle to her acquaintance, and while she gave him no hope of any tender feeling on her part, she treated him with that due respect and gratitude which a lofty-minded woman must feel for a man who has either offered or would offer the highest and noblest gift in his power—the guardianship of his honour and affection.

Fowler was not the only correspondent of Earl Gilbert at Court on the subject of Arabella.

Gilbert had, in compliance with her request, made another appeal to the King about her allowance through Mr. William Stewart.

Stewart, like Fowler and the Earl himself, saw the dangers that surrounded her, and wrote begging Gilbert not to relax his care and advice. The following letter, while it insinuates nothing in the least derogatory to Arabella, yet manifests the anxiety of a good and true friend to her:—

*Mr. William Stewart to the Earl of Shrewsbury.**

"I have had some speech with his Majesty concerning my Lady Arbella and the purpose which your honour had with me upon the river at Richmond, whereunto your honour may be assured his Majesty is wonderful well disposed or affected, seeing thereby one singular well to him and his by the well-doing of that good turn as appertains. Your honour and your good lady will consider by this what the matter means, being loth to be more special until my own touching there, which I intend shall be shortly, and God please after his Majesties removing from here toward Winchester in this next week.

"I do most heartily beseech your honour and my good Lady to continue writing from time to time your wise and loving opinion to my Lady, your Honour's most tender and dearest niece, who I doubt not in time, with wisdom, patience, and good government, shall both be blest by God and ——. For although her virtue and knowledge has been envied of to me, yet her Ladyship has acquired many favourers and sundry well-affected to her humour and good merits by her good behaviour.

"WILLIAM STEWART.

"Woodstock, Sept. 13, 1603."

* Sloane MS., 4161, fol. 15.

The application of Stewart was successful, and Arabella received an allowance from the King's table of "a diet" and eight hundred pounds a year.* Two hundred pounds were given in advance, in order to pay the most pressing of her debts; and in addition to this, among the free gifts of the Exchequer for 1603, is an entry of six hundred and sixty pounds "to the Lady Arbella."

When we remember that she was two thousand pounds in debt, it will be seen that, notwithstanding this free gift, she was still deeply embarrassed, a fact which will explain her anxiety to obtain money, as well as that economy cannot be numbered among the virtues of her ladyship.

The "diet" was considered as a part of the income allowed to an officer of the household or a member of the royal family, and was one of the most important aids where there was anything like a retinue, and Arabella appears to have had one or two ladies and gentlemen in waiting, besides her servants, who must have fared rather hardly out of her allowance of eight hundred a year for Court expenses, at any rate, as far as salary was concerned. What was the exact number and description of dishes allowed to Arabella, I have been unable to ascertain, but some idea may be

* Letter of Cecil to the Earl of Shrewsbury. Lodge, iii.

gathered from the diet allowed to a lady apparently similarly circumstanced in the reign of Henry VIII.*

King Henry VIII. to the Lord Steward and other Officers of the Household, appointing the Diet for the Lady Lucy.

"HENRY R. BY THE KING.

"We will and command you to allow daily and from henceforth unto our right dear and well-beloved, the Lady Lucy, into her chamber the diet and fare hereafter ensuing:—

First, every Morning at Breakfast—

One Chine of Beef at our Kitchen.

One Chete Loaf and one Manchet at our Pantry Bar.

A gallon of Ale at our Buttery Bar.

Item. At Dinner—

A piece of Beef.

A Stroke of Roast.

A Reward at our said Kitchen.

A Cast of Chete Bread at our Pantry.

A Gallon of Ale at our Buttery Bar.

Item. At Afternoon—

A Manchet at our Pantry Bar.

Half a Gallon of Ale at our Buttery Bar.

* Ellis's "Letters," First Series.

Item. At Supper—
A Mess of Porridge.
A Piece of Mutton.
A Reward at our said Kitchen.
A Cast of Chete Bread at our Pantry.
A Gallon of Ale at our Buttery.

Item. At after Supper—
A Chete Loaf and a Manchet at our Pantry Door.
A Gallon of Ale at our Buttery Bar.
Half a Gallon of Wine at our Cellar Bar.

Item. Every Morning at our Wood Yard—
Four tall Shids and two Faggots.

Item. At our Chaundry Bar in Winter every Night—
One Pricket.
Four Sizes of Wax.
Eight Candles, white lights.
One Torch.

Item. At our Pilcher House, weekly—
Six White Carps.

Item. At time of our Removing—
One whole Cart for the Carriage of the Stuff.

Given under our Signet at our Manor of

Easthampstead, the 16th day of July, the 14th Year of our Reign.

"To the Lord Steward of our Household, the Treasurer, Comptroller, Cofferer, Clerks of our Green Cloth, Clerks of our Kitchen, and to all other head Officers of our said Household, and to every of them."

To the above was added a small quantity of sack, on occasion of illness. During the latter years of the reign of Elizabeth, this privilege became greatly abused, and sack, instead of being restricted to a medicine, was served up at meals as an ordinary drink. James determined to correct this abuse, and limited the quantity of sack to twelve gallons a day, not for the use of the whole household, but only for such of the nobility as were allowed a diet, who were to make a special application when they required any sack.

Arabella had therefore no reason to complain of the King on his first accession to the throne. He treated her as a near relation, and fully acknowledged her rank by always giving her the first place after the Queen and the royal children. The confidence of James seemed complete in her, as well as in the families of Hertford and Shrewsbury. On the death of Queen Elizabeth, reports were set about that Lord Beauchamp was endeavouring to gather a force to assert her

claim to the Succession, and a letter was even despatched to the Earl of Shrewsbury to that effect.* The rumour was a natural supplement to the story of Arabella's proposal for Lord Beauchamp's son, and is apparently as well worthy of credence.†

This year was memorable for the bad weather and the plague. More than three thousand in London and the suburbs died of this terrible disease in one week. James lived in such terror of infection that the people were forbidden to crowd round him, and the Court was in constant movement from one place to another, becoming, literally, "a camp volant, which every week dislodgeth."

Woodstock was now the place pitched upon. It contained an ancient palace, which had been so long out of use as only to serve as a prison for Elizabeth when princess. There was, however, good hunting, and James, regardless of the comfort of his courtiers, had it roughly fitted up for himself, while the household were obliged to camp even in tents pitched near. Cecil speaks bitterly of the arrangements, so different

* Letter of Pierrepoint to the Earl of Shrewsbury. Hunter's "Hallamshire."

† "There was a rumour two days since that the Lord Beauchamp stood out and gathered forces, but it was *a false alarm*."—Chamberlayne's "Letters."

from the pomp that always accompanied Elizabeth on her journeys. Says he, "The place is unwholesome, all the house standing upon springs. It is unsavoury, for there is no savour but of cows and pigs. It is uneaseful, for only the King and Queen, with the privy chamber ladies, and some three or four of the Scottish Council, are lodged in the house; and neither Chamberlain, nor one English Councillor, have a room, which will be a sour sauce to some of your old friends, that have been merry with you in a winter's night, from whence they have not removed to their bed in a snow-storm." Two letters are preserved of Arabella from Woodstock.

*Lady Arabella Stuart to Countess of Shrewsbury.**

"MADAME,— If you receive the letters I write, I am sure you see I fail not to write often how the world goeth here, both in particular with me and otherwise as my Intelligence stretcheth. Wherefore I rather interpret your postscript to be a caveat to me to write no more than how I do and my desire to understand of your health, that is, no more than is necessary than a new Commandment to do that which I already do. But lest, in pleasing you, I offend my Uncle, I have adventured to write to him one superfluous letter

* Sloane MS., 4164, fol. 178.

more, and that I may include no serious matter in his, I send you all I have of that kind, which is that the King hath under his hand granted me the aforesaid mess of meat* and £800 *per annum*, and my Lord Cecil will despatch it, I trust with all speed, for so his Lordship promiseth. Your long expected messenger, by whom I should have understood your mind, is not yet come, and the Queen is going hence to-morrow; but the change of place will not cease my expectation till I understand from you, you have changed your mind in that matter, which if you do, I shall hope it is with a mind to come up shortly and let me know it yourself, according to a bruit we have here, which I would fain believe. You shall not fail to receive weekly letters, God willing, or some very great occasion hinder me.

"Mr. Elphinstone, who, you may see, is with me late as well as early, remembers his service to you. And so I humbly take my leave, praying the Almighty to send you all honour, happiness, contentment, &c.

"Your Ladyship's niece to command,

"ARBELLA STUART."

Indorsed, 16 Sep. 1603.

* A "mess of meat" was generally an allowance for four persons. A "diet" generally included more than one "mess." Arabella's allowance is spoken of in both terms.

*Lady Arabella Stuart to the Earl of Shrewsbury.**

"At my return from Oxford where I have spent this day, whilst my Lord Cecil amongst many more weighty affairs was despatching some of mine, I found my Cousin Lacy had disburdened himself at my chamber of the charge he had from you, and straight fell to prepare his freight back, for hindering his back return to-morrow morning as he intendeth.

"I write to you of the reason of the delay of Taxis'† audience; it remaineth to tell how jovially he behaveth himself in the interim. He hath brought great store of Spanish gloves, hawks' hoods, leather for jerkins, and, moreover, a perfumer. These delicacies he bestoweth amongst our Ladies and Lords, I will not say with a hope to effeminate the one sex, but certainly with a hope to grow gracious with the other, as he already is. The curiosity of our sex drew many Ladies and gentlewomen to gaze at him betwixt his landing-place and Oxford his abiding place, which he, desirous to satisfy (I will not say nourish that vice), made his coach stay, and took occasion with petty gifts and

* Lodge, iii.

† The Spanish Ambassador.

courtesies to win soon won affections; who, comparing his manner with Monsieur de Rosny's, hold him their far welcomer guest. At Oxford he took some distaste about his lodging, and would needs lodge at an inn, because he had not all Christ's College to himself, and was not received into the town by the Vice Chancellor *in pontificalibus*, which they never use to do but to the King or Queen or Chancellor of the University, as they say; but those scruples were soon digested, and he vouchsafeth to lodge in a piece of the College till his repair to the King at Winchester.

" Count Aremberg* was here within these few days, and presented to the Queen the Archduke's and the Infanta's pictures excellently drawn. Yesterday the King and Queen dined at a lodge of Sir Henry Lea's, 3 miles hence, and were accompanied by the French Ambassador, and a Dutch Duke. I will not say we were merry at the Dutchkin, lest you complain of me for telling tales out of the Queen's coach; but I could find in my heart to write unto you some of our yesterday's adventures, but that it groweth late, and, by the shortness of your letter, I conjecture you would not have this honest gentleman overladen with such superfluous

* Ambassador from Austria.

relations. My Lo. Admiral is returned from the Prince and Princess, and either is or will be my cousin before incredulous you will believe such incongruities in a counsellor, as love maketh no miracles in his subjects, of what degree or age whatsoever. His daughter of Kildare is discharged of her office, and as near a free woman as may be, and have a bad husband. The Dutch Lady my Lord Wotton spoke of at Basing proved a Lady sent by the Duchess of Holstein to learn the English fashions. She lodgeth at Oxford, and hath been here twice, and thinketh every day long till she be at home, so well she liketh her entertainment, or loveth her own country; in truth she is civil, and therefore cannot but look for the like, which she brings out of a ruder country. But if ever there were such a virtue as courtesy at the Court, I marvel what is become of it, for I protest that I see little or none of it but in the Queen, who ever since her coming to Newbury hath spoken to the people as she passeth, and receiveth their prayers with thanks and thankful countenance, barefaced, to the great contentment of native and foreign people; for I would not have you think the French Ambassador would leave that attractive virtue of our late Queen Elizabeth unremembered or uncommended, when he saw it imitated by our most

gracious Queen, lest you should think we infest even our neighbours with incivility. But what a theme have rude I gotten upon unawares? It is your own virtue I commend, by the foil of the contrary vice; and so, thinking on you, my pen accused myself before I was aware. Therefore I will put it to silence for this time, only adding a short but most hearty prayer for your prosperity in all kinds, and so humbly take my leave.

"From Woodstock, the 16th of September.

"Your Lordship's niece,

"ARBELLA STUART."

The next move of the Court was to Winchester; and here, notwithstanding the pestilence and the distress of the country, extravagant banquets and entertainments were given, and hunting pursued in the usual reckless manner, to the exclusion of business and work.

Arabella was drawn into the vortex, and, much against her will, obliged to dance attendance on those whose only object seems to have been to get rid of life in the most useless manner possible. But still she reserved fixed hours for study, and it was only by rigidly insisting on them that she was at all able to break loose from the profligate crowd amid which she dwelt.

And yet there was no home to which she could turn a longing eye; no gentle remembrance of better things for her. The splendid seats of her relations in the country were all marred and poisoned by discord, for her grandmother Bess was on the most dismal terms with the Earl Gilbert, who seems to have been the one for whom Arabella cared the most, and her Aunt Mary, as the daughter of Bess and the wife of Gilbert, and the inheritress of a difficult temper and unbridled spirit, was not one who could make matters much more cheerful. Arabella was alone, as she had always been, in the midst of a crowd—and still she strove to make the most of her position, and extract such happiness as was possible under the circumstances. Fowler bears witness to her life at this time, as "more fairer than fair, more beautiful than beauteous, truer than truth itself;"* and Sir W. Stewart writes, "I find my Lady Arbella both considerate and wise." What time she could rescue from vanity was spent in "lecture, reading, hearing of service and preaching."† Ambitious eyes were lifted towards the fair student, but all hint at marriage was sternly and utterly silenced by her. As yet she had found none with

* Fowler to the Earl of Shrewsbury. Lodge, iii.

† Ibid.

whom she could feel such sympathy as she required. Her next letters give a hint of her life:—

Lady Arabella Stuart to the Countess of Shrewsbury.

"MADAM,—According to your commandment, I send your Ladyship a few scribbled lines, though I be now going in great haste to give my attendance with some company that is come to fetch me. I am as diligently expected, and as soon missed, as they that perform the most acceptable service. And because I must return at an appointed time to go to my book, I must make the more haste thither. So praying for your happiness, I humbly take my leave.

"From Winchester the 6th of October, 1603.

"Your Ladyship's niece to command,

"ARBELLA STUART." *

Lady Arabella Stuart to the Earl of Shrewsbury.†

"I humbly thank your Lordship for the (as to me it seemed, I assure you) short letters of two

* Sloane MS., 4164, fol. 179.
† Ibid.

sheets of paper, which I received from you by this Bearer, Mrs. Nelson.

"The letters to my Lord Cecil, Sir Thomas Edmonds, were delivered, though not so soon as I wished, they being both absent from hence, so that Sir Thomas's was delivered to the door-keeper of the Council Chamber, and Sir Thomas not coming thither so soon as was expected, Mr. Harley thought good to fetch it from him; and now he hath since disposed of it. I know not nor doubt not but he hath done with it as you would have him, for he seems to me very well instructed in your mind. My Lord Cecil had his as soon as he came.

"My bad eyes crave truce till they may, without their manifest danger, write a letter of a larger volume. And so praying for your Lordship's honour and happiness in the highest degree that ever subject possessed, I humbly take my Leave.

"From Fulston, the 27th of October, 1603.

"Your Lordship's niece,

"ARBELLA STUART."

On the 2nd of November, 1603, we find an order by virtue of the King's privy seal, bearing date the 17th day of September last, for payment of "£200 to the Lady Arbella Stuart as

for one quarter's rent of £800 yearly, due and payable to the said lady by virtue of the said privy seal."*

This was her second quarter's instalment, the first having been anticipated. It came in good time, for expenses were approaching.

James, not a whit less rapacious than Elizabeth, expected the customary presents. New year's tide was approaching, and the Countess Mary now warned her niece to be in good time with some appropriate gift, that would win the hearts of the King and Queen. The short letters are attributable to the ill-health that now assailed Arabella, possibly also to the fear of transmitting news that began to be dangerous, and nearly affecting her. In her note of November 6th, there is a faint indication that things are not so pleasant as heretofore between herself and her aunt Mary.

Lady Arabella Stuart to the Countess of Shrewsbury.†

"MADAME,—I humbly thank you for your good advice against New year's tide. I think there will be no remedy but I must provide

* Devon's "Pell Records," p. 6.
† Sloane MS., 4164, fol. 180.

myself from London, though being loth to do so.

"I understand by Sir William Stewart how much I am bound to you and my uncle.

"I will bethink myself against your long expected trusty messenger come, whatsoever he be, and that expectation shall keep me from troubling you with so full and tedious a discourse as I could find in my heart to disburden my mind withal to you.

"I humbly thank you for my servant, G. Chancellor, and so praying for your happiness I humbly cease.

"From Fulston, the 4th of November, 1603.

"Your Ladyship's niece to command,

"ARBELLA STUART."

*Lady Arabella Stuart to the Countess of Shrewsbury.**

"MADAME,—Because I received a letter from you by this gentlewoman, I dare not for incurring her opinion of my relapse into some unkindness toward you, but send you a few lines. I will keep (account?) of all the dates of my letters. That letter of yours which I received since by Mr. Harley I have answered by him.

* Sloane MS., 4164, fol. 180.

"My eyes are extremely swoln, yet I have not spared them, when I had occasion to employ them for your sake. Therefore now they may boldly crave a cessation for this time, only performing their office whilst I subscribe myself, such as I am and will continue, that is

"Your Ladyship's niece to command,

"ARBELLA STUART."

Indorsed, 6 Nov., 1603.

*Lady Arabella Stuart to the Countess of Shrewsbury.**

"MADAME,—I humbly thank you for your letters, pill, and hartshorn. I have taken, continued, and increased an extreme cold.

"Mrs. Cooke can tell you how the world goes here. And so praying for your happiness I humbly take my leave.

"From Fulston, the 28th of November, 1603.

"Your Ladyship's niece to command,

"ARBELLA STUART."

Lady Arabella Stuart to the Earl of Shrewsbury.†

"I must only return your Lordship humble thanks for the letters I have received, and reserve

* Sloane MS., 4164.

† Ibid., fol. 181.

the answer, till I trust a few days will make me able to write without extreme pain of my head.

"Mr. Cooke can tell your Lordship all the news that is here.

"And so praying for your Lordship's happiness, I humbly take my leave.

"From Fulston, 28th of Nov., 1603.

"Your Lordship's niece,

"ARBELLA STUART."

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